

BUDDHA'S RELICS FROM KAPILAVASTU



K. M. SRIVASTAVA

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AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN

DELHI

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PREFACE

I will lie wise
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
Such power, for I grow weary to behold
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
Without reproach and check.

—*Shelley*

Work is worship is a well-known precept. Very difficult, however, it is to translate the same into practice and set an example. Forces of an evil nature always act with determination against any dedicated work, particularly when the same happens to be pious as well. Ancient literature of India is replete with instances of bitter struggle between those working with recognised ideals and others possessing an altogether destructive mind. A man whose power of judgement and reasoning has not reached a stage of maturity may feel that he is not expected to do anything in the world, because everything is divinely arranged. He would rather feel inclined to look on as a silent spectator and leisurely enjoy, if possible, in the actions and manifestations of God. This is certainly not the way in which a truly enlightened person thinks and behaves. On the other hand, a man with sound judgement, who has a proper estimate of his own faculties, nature, allotted place and function in this cosmic play of the Supreme Spirit, never thinks of evading his duties and living an idle life, never loses enthusiasm in the performance of the works, which are in his view divinely allotted to him. He cannot afford to deprive himself of the serene joy of voluntarily and intelligently participating in the Divine play with a sense of freedom and love. It is his privilege as a man to do freely, consciously, with love, admiration and reverence for the Divine Player, what he would otherwise be compelled to do slavishly under the pressure of the forces of the world.

The same ideal of conduct Lord Krishna presented before man in Geeta and said, "Cultivate the spirit of heroic and sweet sportsmanship in all your activities and in all the aspects of your life in this Divine world. Freely and modestly, calmly and fearlessly, joyfully and intelligently, participate in the mundane play of the Supreme Spirit, and with unfailing vigour and enthusiasm apply yourself to the execution of whatever duties He may allot to you in His playground. Like a true sportsman, think not of profit and loss, victory and defeat, success and unsucess, think not of the fruits of your action, but think only of the duties divinely allotted to you and perform them in a way worthy of a chosen playmate of the Divine Player." To dedicate oneself to the sacred feet of the Lord is the secret of all teachings of all the scriptures and marks the culmination of all spiritual discipline. Self-surrender does not mean that one should abandon his duties in life and sit idle. In the act of self-surrender it is the self (*Atman*) that is surrendered first of all, and along with it the mind, the ego, the intellect and the body are surrendered to the Lord. While bringing it into practice the aspirant distinctly begins to feel that it is the Lord who is functioning through his body, mind and speech. Prior to this he believed that it was he himself who did everything; whereas now he feels that it is God who is doing everything on his behalf. Acting in the true spirit of the above teachings of an ideal conduct, a man may not be bereft of pains and sufferings, which in a normal course are a source of great demoralization and frustration. Afflictions of pain and suffering should not in any case deter a man from work and make him despondent. They ought to be treated as the gifts and blessings of God. With a magnetic attraction they keep the man in constant touch with God, reducing the distance between them at a very fast pace. Sights of pain and suffering only kindled the fire of emancipation in the heart and mind of Buddha and before Enlightenment he had to undergo many austerities and trials, so much so that on certain occasions he was totally unnerved.

Achievement of the ultimate goal continues to remain an empty dream so long a man believes in his own strength. He will have to feel desperate and completely helpless and surrender totally before God. Many obstacles raise their head, sometimes in a ghastly form, at every step. Instead of feeling doomed in such moments, a man has to gather courage and pray to God for moral strength, adequate enough to stand the

test and rise above the hours of despair. They are, as a matter of fact, stepping stones to the ultimate goal. Instruments are always there as tool to create the obstacles and evil forces. A truly spiritual man, however, continues to perform the duties allotted to him in the God's world with the principle of hate the sin and not the sinner in his mind. The sinner should only be treated as an instrument in the hands of God. With this feeling in mind the man should acknowledge with thanks the contribution of all those, who are supposed to be responsible for the obstacles and evil forces. The world is the creation of God and as such we have to adjust ourselves to the circumstances and environments in which we are placed. We are not the master of the circumstances, but at the same time we have not to act in a slavish manner. Keeping ethical principles and truth as the beacon light in our life, we have to live in the world of God always abounding in peace and happiness. The religion of Buddhism is based chiefly on the fundamental ethical principles, which alongwith truth should not be sacrificed at any cost. Any compromise on these issues is simply a manifestation of one's own weakness.

The number of persons who attain the status of a real saint is necessarily very small. But these few saints are really the teachers of humanity and the leaders of culture and civilization. They are, as it were, the open windows of the otherwise closed societies and races of men. It is through them that the Divine Light enters into the human society and enlightens its intellectual, moral and spiritual atmosphere. It is from them that the ordinary people get glimpses of the noblest ideals of intellectual pursuits and moral endeavours, the highest standards of values, the deepest meanings of life and its aspirations, the innermost significance of the orders and adjustments of the diverse departments of the cosmic process. They are the permanent source of inspiration to the members of all grades of the human society. It is from the lives and teachings of the saints that the people of the world imbibe the idea that the culture of their social virtues and their sense of duty and obligation should not be confined within certain territorial boundaries or within certain racial, communal or national limits. We learn from them that morality does not become truly human morality until and unless it transcends the social limits and recognizes the entire humanity as one great and beautiful family. The ideas of universal brotherhood, universal love and sympathy, respect for all life as

sacred and unity of the world-order, are based on the spiritual experience of the saint.

Personal contact and guidance of a saint (a God-inspired teacher) is necessary to enable anyone to undertake and pursue the path of spiritual discipline. I was fortunate enough in meeting such a great man in the year 1958 itself. He was Revered Dr. Sri Krishna Lal Ji Saheb, at whose feet I learnt the alphabets of spiritual discipline. With a serene face, he was an embodiment of love and affection and the whole atmosphere around him abounded in peace and bliss. Endowed with superhuman qualities, he was an enlightened soul. Like a lotus flower, he demonstrated the art of living by remaining completely untinged by the mundane life in which he displayed the spirit of a best sportsman. Renouncement of the world had no place in his message. According to him the materialistic life itself was a battle-field like Kurukshetra in which a man acts like a soldier, either as a party of righteousness or evil forces. I had the privilege of gaining several illuminating experiences at his August feet during the course of meditation and also on several occasions when I was placed far away from him. While the teachings of the great man in itself were very forceful and inspiring, he armed me with great spiritual strength to mould my activities on the lines desired by him and enjoy pleasant and blissful life in the material world. The ultimate goal, however, is still far beyond my reach, but with firm determination I am marching ahead under the feelings of 'Miles to go before I sleep and Miles to go before I sleep'.

Though the great man did not physically live to see the work done by me on the location of Kapilavastu, he continued to arm me with adequate moral strength to fight all the evil forces in this arduous job through his true spiritual successor Revered Dr. Kartar Singh Ji Saheb. I consider the presentation of this book to be a sacred occasion to bow my head at the feet of both, to whom I owe my success in all fields of life.

Dated 21.7.1985 (New Delhi)

K.M. SRIVASTAVA

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KAPILAVASTU AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

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TILaura-KOT

SAGARAHWA

SRINAGAR

BIKULI

WIGALI-SAGAR

ARAURA-KOT

TAULIHAWA

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GOTHAWA

SSANIA

SISWA TAL.

GANWARIA

PIPRAHWA

BIRDPUR

SHOHRATGARH R.S.

KAPILAVASTU

NAUGARH R.S.

BARHNI R.S.

GETEN.

LUMBINI

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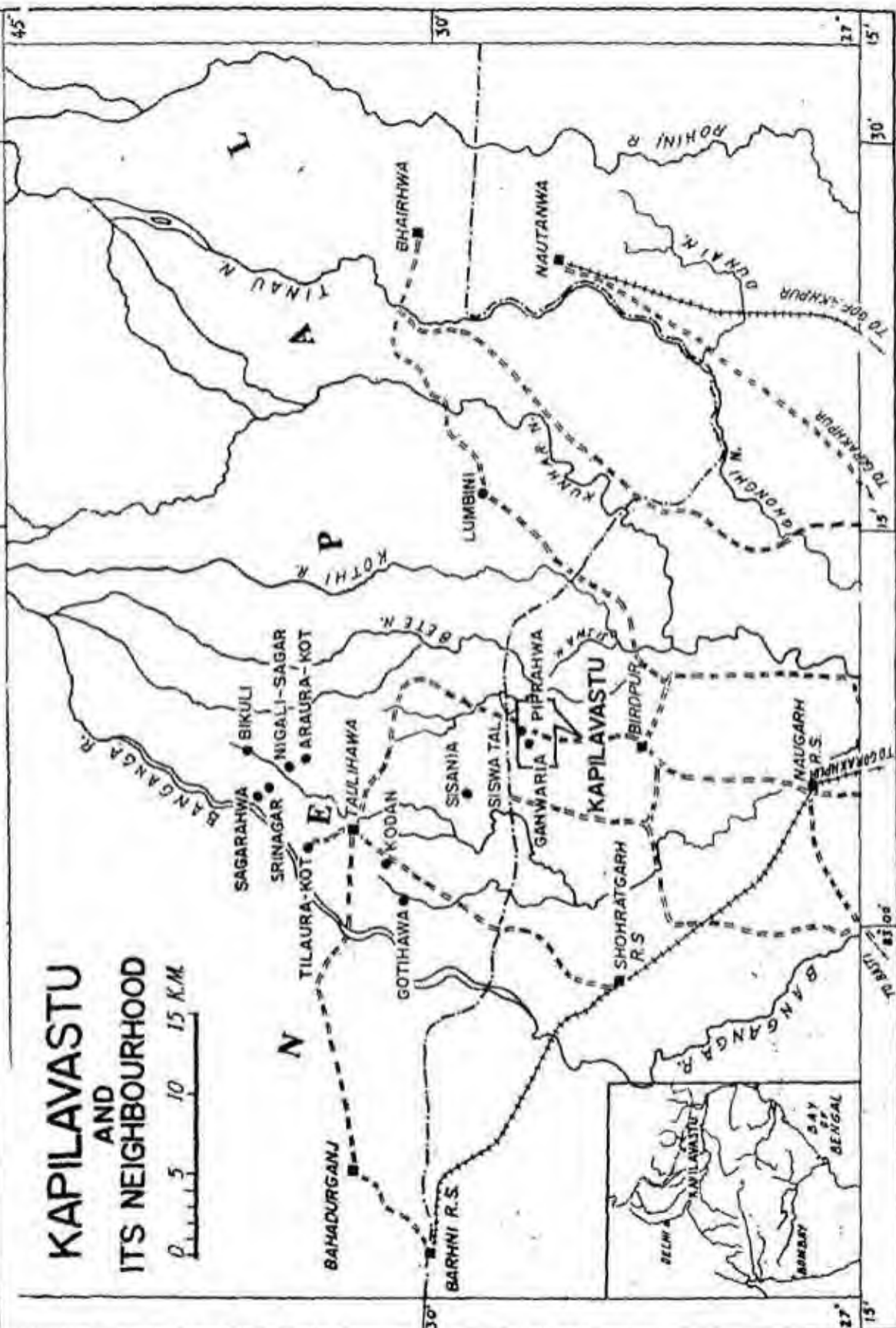
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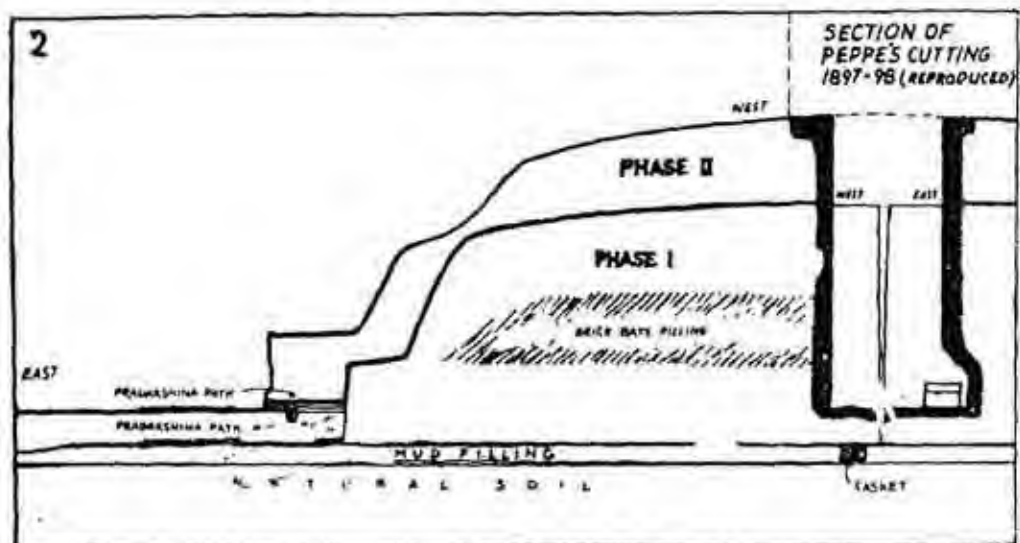
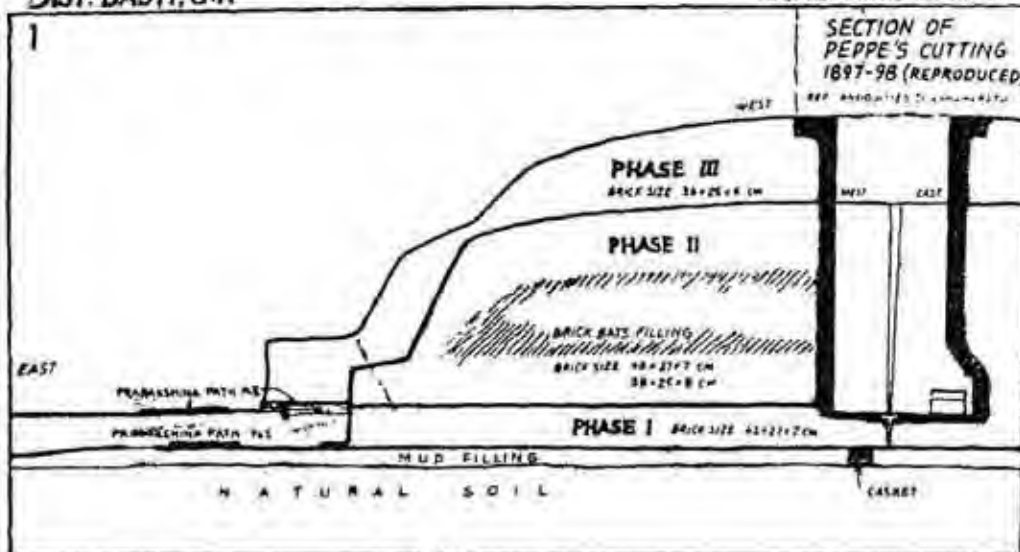
TO BASTI





PIPRAHWA : 1971 -75 (KAPILAVASTU)
DIST. BASTI, U.P.

SCHEMATIC SECTION





I. REMINISCENCES AND INITIATION

Though it is more than two decades when I was blessed with the privilege of meeting my spiritual Guru for the first time, the day and the dialogues are still fresh in my memory. On 18th October in the year 1958 I could have his darshan on the occasion of annual gathering held for three days every year at the time of Dussehra without any knowledge whatsoever in the field of spirituality. The place of the annual gathering is a sub-division known as Sikandarabad in Bulandshahr District of Uttar Pradesh in India. I had gone there simply to meet my brother, who made out a programme for Delhi to meet me before the annual session. I happened to be out of Delhi at that time and as such he exhorted my wife to request me to see him at Sikandarabad. While presenting these lines I can emphatically say that it was not a call of my brother but a call from the Great Man. My brother introduced me to the spiritual Guru after the evening session of meditation and discourse was over. The Great Man instead of assessing my feelings about spirituality blurted out and said that, I was not fit enough to achieve anything either in the material world or spiritual. I have always been very egoistic in nature and could not stand the opinion of anyone, who made an attempt to condemn me. In the threatening voice of the Great Man, however, there was such a great charm and magnetic attraction that my tongue was completely sealed and I could not speak a single word. I consider those moments of first meeting to be most priceless in my life and their recollection generates in me an unbounded enthusiasm and spirit invigorating an altogether fresh life and energy.

Of course, the words uttered by the Great Man were irritating enough but, at the same time they were so enchanting and hypnotizing that, I could not sleep for the whole night. All along my eyes were wide open anxiously waiting for the dawn and those moments when they will be able to have the darshan of the Great Man once again. Keeping awake all the night developed the natural feeling that the hours of duration had probably multiplied. At long last the moments of next darshan came closer after I finished the routines of the early hours of the morning and took bath. The session of meditation and discourse commenced at 7.00 A.M. I also took my seat at a place not far away from the Great Man. Some sensations were no doubt felt by me during the course of meditation but, they did not appear to be so occupying as the enlightening face of the Great Master on which I kept on gazing. Certain teachings in the discourse, which followed the meditation were quite appealing but, their impact on me was not as much as they deserved. The morning session, no doubt very tiring for a new man, ultimately came to a close and the disciples gradually dispersed. My brother took me again and presented before the Master. I do not know if the Great Man had taped in his mind the words which he had uttered in the preceding evening because, he repeated them in the same knocking tone without a single letter's variation. Condemnation once again came down upon me but, in spite of all consciousness I was totally tongue-tied by the living God. A great physician by profession, he was well-known as Dr. Sri Krishna Lal Bhatnagar.

The sessions of meditation and discourse continued vigorously for three days. I participated in all the sessions actively but, without much attraction in the meditation and discourses. The only attraction for me was the facial expression of the Great Man, which had a magnetic touch of Divine Grace. The attention of my eyes, therefore, continued to be fixed on his face. I did not care to listen to the discourses, which flowed from his mouth like a continuous stream. He could speak for hours together without a break. Though the session of meditation and discourses lasted from four to eight hours only, the great Master was found to be pre-occupied all the time with his disciples. The hours of his rest and sleep were almost negligible. In the midst of continuous pre-occupation, signs of any exhaustion or strain could never be observed on his face. He anxiously made enquiries about the comforts of each and every aspirant and tried to

see that there was no inconvenience to anyone. An embodiment of love (superhuman) and affection, He was a personified God in flesh and bone. The aspirants, one and all, were amazed to see the energy possessed by the Master and only a few of them, who had advanced a little on the spiritual path, could realise that he had risen far above the physical plane. Pains and exhaustion overpowers only those of us, who are engrossed in worldly affairs and materialistic pursuits. A real saint keeps on enjoying the nectar of the spiritual bliss, possible only when a man has risen far above, not only the realms of physical, but also the mental plane. Both physical and mental planes are at his service and command and he makes use of them only to perform the basic and essential functions of the materialistic world.

The annual session of three days ultimately came to a close on the 21st October 1958 and after packing up my baggage I approached the Master to seek permission for leaving the sacred place. The Master was pleased to extend permission. Just on the eve of my departure I humbly requested the Master with folded hands for any advice. This happened to be the most momentous occasion in my life when the Master questioned me in a forceful and majestic tone, if I had faith or respect for any Divine Man. I came out with a spontaneous reply that I had the greatest liking for Lord Buddha. While appreciating my sentiments he uttered without losing any time 'Detachment'.

The word of 'Detachment' was followed by the exhortation that I should start meditation with a concentration on Lord Buddha at least twice a day in the morning and evening. The exhortation was a matter of great surprise to me, particularly because it was to my liking. During the course of my spiritual association with the great Master I observed that mine was not the solitary example in which He gave advice to concentrate on the Lord of individual's liking. He never attempted to detract any man from the path already treaded by the individual. At the same time, with his own spiritual force, he led the individual on the right path, according to his instincts gradually, so much so that without much loss of time the individual lost all interest in his original thinking and respect for a particular Lord nourished in his mind.

During the course of discourses on three days of the annual session, the Master emphatically repeated a number of times that a real saint, particularly of His discipline, rewards a man not only with spiritual achievements, but also success in the material world. Renunciation of the world was never considered by him to be necessary in spiritual pursuits. It

his eyes the world and the family were the best and most appropriate battle-fields for spiritual exercises. A man, who performs his duties in the world in a devoted manner and achieves success, has a better claim for spiritual attainments than those who are not mindful or conscious of their worldly duties. Devoted work is the best form of worship, if the same is performed in the name of and for God. The same ideal is laid down in the Bhagwat Gita as well. The common belief amongst us that it was not possible to focus attention both on the work and God simultaneously has no basis whatsoever.

In fact, it requires a little practice and training after which a man will himself realise that it is not as difficult as generally believed by the common man. He will further be enlightened to see that the normal duties of the world are performed in a far more smooth and perfect manner, if they are in tune with the name of the Almighty, completely detached from the ego sense that, I am the monitor of such and such work. The ideal of the Great Master was very well contained in the word of 'Detachment', which he whispered on the eve of my departure on the concluding day of the annual session. On the very face of it the word 'Detachment' reflected in my mind the life of Lord Buddha, who renounced the world in quest of salvation but the great Master, I believe, attempted to convey something far deeper. He never wanted me to get detached from the world and renounce the same. The sum and substance of the ideal, which he tried to convey to me, was to perform all the duties of the world efficiently but, in a completely detached manner. I could catch the sense of the word 'Detachment' after a long time. We have to perform our duties like an instrument of God completely unmindful of the result or outcome of our action.

Though the words of the Great Master that a real saint, particularly of His discipline, rewards a man not only with spiritual achievements but, also success in the material world, sounded to me as something contradictory, the hard truth behind them was realised by me about two decades later. I accepted the advice of the Master received on the eve of my departure on the concluding day of the annual session and started meditation both in the morning and evening regularly with a concentration on Lord Buddha.

After a lapse of a few days the happy occasion of Diwali approached

and I with my family decided to go to Allahabad to enjoy the festival with my brother, who had introduced me to the Master. While we were at Allahabad, we used to visit the residence of one of the senior disciples of the Master daily in the morning. Within a few days I observed that I was completely helpless in concentrating on Lord Buddha. The place of the image of Lord Buddha was taken by the Great Master, who appeared before me during the course of my meditation. It was something very startling and I considered it advisable to intimate the Master about the developments. The Great Master did not lose any time in sending a reply to my letter exhorting me to continue to concentrate on the image which appeared before me in meditation. The letter came as a great consolation to me on account of the feelings that I was not led astray.

After I returned back to Delhi I learnt that the Master visits Delhi very frequently. In his discourses the Master had told his disciples that, the easiest and simplest way of speedy progress in spiritualism was regular and close contact with the Master. With these words in my mind I determined to meet the Great Man as frequently as possible, so as to maintain a close contact. Within a few days the Great Man made a programme of Delhi and it came out to be a very good opportunity to develop closer contact. I took leave from office and remained with the Master for all the days he stayed in Delhi. Since I had taken leave he was pleased to take me with him to all the places he visited in Delhi. The first close association with the Master led to thrilling experiences. Each and every nerve point of the body appeared to pulsate with great life, vigour and energy. The experiences were so enchanting that I determined to maintain the close contact with the Great Man. I used to snatch time regularly to see Him either at Ghaziabad or Sikandarabad in addition to the meeting at Delhi itself. An aura of peace and bliss dominated the surroundings of the Master.

The close association with the Great Man continued on the same lines for more than two years, with the magnetic attachment growing every day. During this period I observed many followers being initiated by the Master but, somehow or the other the necessity was never felt by me. I, therefore, never requested Him for initiation. The sacred day, however, came of its own. One day, while I was at Ghaziabad with the Master, he called me and instructed to purchase some sweets for a ceremony in the morning. I could immediately catch the purpose for which the sweets were

required. They were needed for the pious ceremony of initiation. I was further instructed by the Master to get ready very early the next morning for the pious ceremony. Both I and my wife were initiated at the same time next morning. I continued to remain in close association of the Great Man till the last breath of His life in 1970. During this long period I had a large number of enchanting experiences but, this is not the place to dilate upon them. I must revert back to the main track of the subject.

As already stated above, the Master used to emphasise in his discourses that a real saint of His line of discipline blesses a man with success not only in the spiritual but also in the material world. The double fortune was showered on me as well. Besides the spiritual achievements, I was blessed with success in my service career also. Though the Master was not alive when the beginning of the climax of the chain of successes in the material world was made, it happened in 1970 when I was promoted to the rank of Superintending Archaeologist and posted at Patna, where I joined on the 28th August.

The climax of the success brought back to my memory the first meeting with the Great Man when I impressed upon Him that I had a great regard for Lord Buddha. The location of the place where Lord Buddha spent the first twenty-nine years of his life before renouncing the world in quest of salvation was not known. The identification of the ancient site was a great challenge to the archaeologists of the world. It was, however, on account of the blessings of the Great Man that circumstances to meet the challenge were created for me.

Within two days after I joined as Superintending Archaeologist at Patna, my eyes casually passed through the signature of B.B. Lal on one of the letters. He was the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India at that time. Since he had assumed office as Director General the practice of writing D.O. letters to branch officers was stopped almost completely. It was only in matters of extraordinary importance that the Director General wrote a D.O. letter to the branch or circle officer. Having observed the signature of the Director General I went through the contents of the letter very carefully, simply because of curiosity. The letter was addressed to my predecessor Ballabh Saran. While enclosing a copy of the complaint lodged with the Prime Minister of India regarding negligence and wanton destruction of the ancient site of Piprawha, B.B. Lal

requested Ballabh Saran to take necessary action. The complaint was lodged by one of the monks who stayed at Naugarh, headquarter of a sub-division in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh. My curiosity on the signature of B.B. Lal deepened further on account of the contents of the letter and I rushed to see the reply sent by Ballabh Saran. While inviting the attention of B.B. Lal to the D.O. letter on Piprawha, Ballabh Saran submitted a long list of posts which he needed before undertaking the works.

The letter meant nothing but to evade the issue and pass the ball on to the other's court. Ballabh Saran very well knew that sanction of so many posts at a time on a simple complaint was well nigh impossible. There was no further correspondence from B.B. Lal on the issue. Neither the posts were sanctioned nor the work was undertaken.

An important matter which was filed for more than a year provided me a golden opportunity to grab. I got restless to visit the site but, it was not possible to reach there during monsoons. I had, therefore, to content myself with the study of the references to Piprahwa, which happened to be of immense help in the discoveries made later on. The monk of Naugarh, who had lodged the complaint with the Prime Minister, believed the remains at Piprahwa to be of the ancient town of Pipli Kanan, the place from where Mauryas hailed. This was simply on account of some similarity between the names Piprahwa and Pipli Kanan.

II. ANALYSIS AND CALCULATION

In the year 1897 W.C. Peppé, an English landlord of Birdpur, bored a shaft in the *stupa* at Piprahwa in search of valuables and reliquaries. In the initial stages the digging was abandoned at a depth of 8 feet only. In October 1897, V.A. Smith, the reputed historian inspected the *stupa* and pronounced it to be very important and ancient. The excavation in the shaft was, therefore, resumed in January 1898. Ten feet below the summit of the *stupa* Peppé came across a completely shattered small soapstone vase, similar to those found lower down. Mixed up with clay, beads; crystals; gold ornaments; cut stars, etc. were the precious objects found within the vase. Peppé observed a circular pipe-like hole filled with clay, which went further down to 2 feet. On the top, the pipe was 1 foot in diameter, which was reduced to 4 inches at the bottom. There was no further change in the diameter till the bottom of a massive sandstone coffer 4 ft. 4 inches \times 2 ft. 2¼ inches in size. The covering slab of the coffer was observed at a depth of eighteen feet below the summit of the *stupa* and 31.5 inches to the east of the clay pipe. The pipe was encircled by moulded or roughly cut-to-the-size bricks. At the bottom of the coffer, the clay pipe turned into a rectangular shape measuring 17 \times 5 inches, which went to a depth of one brick. Further deep it again became circular and reduced to the original diameter of 4 inches till the end of brick-work two feet below the bottom of the huge box.

The covering slab of the coffer was broken into four pieces on account of the weight above. A deep groove was provided in the lid, so that it could fit closely into the flange on the sides of the coffer. Four,

roughly semi-circular projections, two each on the longer sides, were meant for easy handling. The weight of the covering slab was 408 pounds and of the coffer as a whole 1537 pounds

The coffer contained the following objects:

1. A soapstone vase $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in maximum diameter.
2. A similar, but inscribed, soapstone vase 6 inches high and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter.
3. A soapstone *lota*-shaped vessel $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches high (with lid) and $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. The lid was lying away from the vessel.
4. A small soapstone round casket $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter and $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches high.
5. A crystal casket, polished to the perfection, $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter and 4.5 inches high (with its cover). The lid had a beautiful handle in the shape of a hollow fish, filled with seven granulated stars in gold leaf and tiny paste beads.

In addition to the above objects, the coffer contained many wooden and silver vessels smashed to pieces. Inside the vessels or relic urns there were various valuable objects, the number of which exceeded several hundreds. The objects included fragments of bone; gold ornaments in different designs; impressions of two females; elephant and lion figures in gold leaf; gold and silver flowers and stars; tiny amulet-like gold box; gold *triratnas*; a gold disc impressed with profuse connected spirals; plain gold bars; rolls of gold leaves; pearls of many sizes, some of which are welded together in sets of two, three or four; a carnelian and malachite bird; leaves serrated and veined; seed vessels; *triratnas*, and flowers in semi-precious minerals; coral ornaments; beads of various shapes and sizes in gold, silver, carnelian, amethyst, topaz, garnet, coral and crystal; cut semi-precious stones; pieces of mica and specially rolled copper wire.¹

Of all the finds, the most important was the inscription on the lid of the smaller soapstone vase (No. 2 above). The script is Brahmi but, the engraving of letters is rather crude. Much interpretative exercise on the inscription by a generation of scholars followed its discovery. First of all the inscription was read and interpreted by G. Buhler. As it is necessary,

1. W.C. Peppé, 'Piprahwa Stupa containing Relics of Buddha, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1898, p. 573

Buhler did a little restoration in the inscription in order to interpret it in a proper manner. After restoration he made the inscription to read as' (I) *ya sal (i) lanidhane Budhasa Bhagavata(sa) Sakiyana sukita bhatinam sabha-ginikana Saputadalana*. He translated the inscription thus

"This relic shrine of divine Buddha (is the donation) of the Sakya Sukiti (i.e. either 'of Sukiti's brothers' or 'of Sukiti and his brothers'), associated with their sisters, sons and wives."¹

According to the interpretation of Buhler, presented by him in a preliminary note, the relics contained in the vase were those of Buddha, which the Sakyas of Kapilavastu received as one-eighth share at Kusinara after his cremation. As it is well known, Buddha died at Kusinara identified with Kusinagara in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh. The Mallas of Kusinara cremated the body with ceremonies befitting a universal King. On receiving, the news of death, seven close associates of Buddha viz., Ajatasatru of Magadha, the Licchavis of Vaisali, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Koliyas of Ramagrama, a Brahmin of Vethadipa, and the Mallas of Pava, rushed messengers to claim a portion of the bone relics in order to erect *stupas* over them. The Mallas of Kusinara, at first unwilling to share the relics, were brought to reason by a Brahmin named Drona. On his intercession the relics were divided into eight equal parts. Drona himself erected a *stupa* over the urn in which the remains had been collected. The Moriyas of Pippalivana reached Kusinara only after the distribution was over and had, therefore, to content themselves with the embers only. Thus, there came into existence eight *stupas* over the corporeal relics, the ninth over the urn and the tenth over the embers. The *stupa* at Kapilavastu was one of those erected over the corporeal relics. Besides referring to the relics of Buddha, the inscription found in the *stupa* at Piprahwa came out to be the first document on the Sakyas.

A. Barth read the inscription and interpreted it almost at the same time and in the same manner as Buhler, though independently of each other. The text of the inscription, according to Barth is as follows:

1. G. Buhler, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1898, p. 387

*iyam salilanīdhane budhasa bhagavate Sakiyanam sukitibhatinam
sabhagini kanam saputadalanam*

The following translation of the inscription was presented by Barth:

"This receptacle of relics of the blessed Buddha (is the pious gift) of the Sakyas, the brothers of Sukirti and his brothers), jointly with their sisters, their sons and their wives."¹

V.A. Smith, the reputed historian came out with an interpretation, which was a little confusing. He said that the depositors believed the fragments of bone to be part of the sacred body (*Sarirani*) of Gautam Buddha himself. Complicating the entire issue he expressed, "The Sakyas of Kapilavastu as the relations of Buddha, obtained a share of the relics of the master at the time of the cremation. It is possible that the Piprahwa *stupa*, which is only eleven miles from Kapilavastu, may be that erected by the Sakya brethren immediately after the death of Gautam."² Smith could not decide whether the *stupa* at Piprahwa was the same which was erected by the Sakyas at Kapilavastu over the corporeal relics of Buddha received by them at Kusinara after the Lord's cremation or of the Sakyas massacred by Vidudabha. The confusion in his mind is evident from his statement that Piprahwa was only eleven miles from Kapilavastu.

An account of the massacre of the Sakyas, referred to above, appears in the introduction to the Bhaddasala-jataka (No. 465) and almost in identical terms in Buddhaghosa's commentary on the Dhammapada. Kapilavastu and the Sakyas are said to have been destroyed by king Vidudabha, son of Prasenjit of Kosala, during the life time of Buddha. A stinging reproach from the Sakyas, on account of his mother having been a slave girl of the Sakyas, led Vidudabha to massacre them mercilessly in revenge. The fact of complete destruction of the Sakyas is, however, not corroborated by the Buddhist text *Mahaparinibbanasutta*, which record that the Sakyas of Kapilavastu were enjoying life and prosperity after the death of Buddha. According to the text, the Sakyas claimed a portion of the relics of Buddha on the pretext that the Blessed one was their own

1. A. Barth, 'The Inscription of the Piprahwa Vase' (English translation), *Indian Antiquary* 36 (May 1907), p. 117
2. V.A. Smith, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1898, p. 587

kinsman. And the same text further tells that the Sakyas duly carried out their promise and built a *stupa* at Kapilavastu after holding a feast in honour of the relics.

The translation of the inscription rendered by Rhys Davids is slightly different from that presented by Buhler. He interpreted the inscription in the following manner:

"This shrine for relics of the Buddha, the August one, is that of the Sakyas, the brethren of the Distinguished One, in association with their sisters and with their children and their wives".¹ Rhys Davids, like Buhler and Barth, was also of the opinion that the *stupa* at Piprahwa is the same which, according to the Buddhist text *Mahāparinibbāna sutta*, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu had raised immediately after the master's death over their share of the relics.

Pischel did not change the interpretation of Rhys Davids basically, but approached it in a different manner. He objected to the idea of gift or of pious act and introduced the words. "Pious foundation" in their place. With this modification he translated the inscription thus:

"This receptacle of the relics of the blessed Buddha is the pious foundation of the Sakyās, of the brothers with their sisters, with their children and their wives".²

J.F. Fleet was the first scholar who changed the order of the text of the inscription. He was of the opinion that the record does not begin with the word *iyam*, as believed by other scholars, but with *Sukiti-bhatinam*. The ground for the change in the beginning of the inscription, as believed by Fleet, was the engraving of the letters *yanam* of the word *Sakiyanam* above *Saki*. He felt that *Sakiyanam* was apparently the last word to be engraved and the available space having exhausted, the engraver put *yanam* above *saki*. Thus according to Fleet the inscription should be read as '*Sukiti-bhatinam Sa-bhaginikanam saputadalanam iyam salila-nidhane Budhasa bhagavate sakiyanam*'.³

1. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1898, p. 598
2. Pischel, *Indian Antiquary*, 36 (May 1907), p. 119
3. J.F. Fleet, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1905, p. 679

Fleet interpreted the inscription in two different ways which are inconsistent with each other. In the beginning he considered the relics to be of Buddha himself as can be observed by the following translation:

"Of the brethren of the well-famed one, together with (their) sisters (and) together with (their) children and wives, (is) this receptacle (or deposit) of relics of Buddha, the Blessed one, (namely) of the Sakyas".¹

Though the reading of the inscription by Fleet continued to be the same, he gave an altogether new interpretation a year later in the following words:

"Of the brethren of the Well-famed one, together with (their) little sisters (and) together with (their) children and wives, this (is) a deposit of relics, (namely) of the kinsmen of Buddha, the Blessed one."²

With the above translation Fleet tried to impress that the relics were not of Buddha, but of his kinsmen. The number of the kinsmen, as believed by him, was more than several hundred and for each one of them an object was placed inside the box. In order to justify his new interpretation he emphatically said, "The record in fact commemorates an enshrining of relics, not of Buddha himself, but his kinsmen, with their wives and children and unmarried sisters. And now we see the curious nature of the articles numbering more than seven hundred which were found in the *stupa* along with the inscribed vase."³

Elucidating his interpretation further, Fleet said that the kinsmen of Buddha were Sakyas of Kapilavastu who were massacred by king Vidudabha, son of Prasenjit as a revenge of the stinging reproach. The argument of Fleet that *Buddhasa Sakiya* meant "the kinsmen of Buddha" is not convincing enough. He said, "In the expression *Buddhasa Sakiya*, 'The kinsmen of Buddha'—an expression which assuredly was not invented for the occasion, but must have been habitual one—I find the older form of the tribal name. The Sakiya, the kinsmen of Buddha became known as the Sakiyas, after no doubt, the time when he had passed away".⁴ There is no justification in Fleet's assumption that *Buddhasa*

1. J.F. Fleet, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1905, p. 679

2. *Ibid.* 1906, p. 150

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

Sakya was changed into *Sakiyas* after the death of Buddha. The *Sakya* community should have felt elated in associating the name with Buddha rather than dropping it.

Like J.F. Fleet, Sylvain Levi was also confused in the interpretation of the inscription by translating it in two different ways. According to the first interpretation the relics were of Buddha consecrated by the *Sakyas*, the pious brothers, together with their families. The second interpretation of Levi was similar to that of Fleet. He believed that the relics had nothing to do with Buddha. They were of the *Sakyas*, his pious brothers, who according to the well known legend, were massacred by Vidudabha together with their wives and little children. In one respect, however, the opinion of Sylvain Levi must be lauded. While discussing the inscription for interpretation he was of the opinion that it merely recalled a more ancient consecration and the inscription was engraved on the occasion of the reconstruction of the *stupa*. In the light of his first interpretation the inscribed casket referred to Lord Buddha and was kept in the *stupa* containing his corporeal relics at the time of reconstruction'.¹

While dealing with the inscription of Piprahwa vase and the various interpretations presented by the scholars, A. Barth declared the translation of M. Senart to be the best of all and perfect. Senart translated the inscription thus:

"This receptacle of relics of the blessed Buddha of *Sakyas* (is the pious gift) of the brothers of *Sukirti*, jointly with their sisters, with their sons and their wives".²

Buhler always remained on the look out for some evidence or the other to push back the date of early use of writing in India. He, therefore, declared the inscription vaguely to be anterior to Asoka, during whose time writing is said to have been introduced in the country in the third century B.C. Buhler died before furnishing an account of the reasons which led him to push back the date so early. According to his interpretation of the inscription, as already mentioned, the relics contained in the

1. Sylvain Levi, 'The Inscription of the Piprahwa Vase', (English translation), *Indian Antiquary*, 36 (1907), p. 120

2. M. Senart, *Journal Asiatique* VII (1906), p. 136

inscribed soapstone vase were of Buddha, which the Sakyas of Kapilavastu received as one-eighth share at Kusinara on his death. There being a wide gap between the date of the death of Buddha in 487-483 B.C. and the time of Asoka, Buhler was not in a position to reconcile his interpretation without declaring the inscription to be anterior to Asoka. He was, however, very cautious in not assigning a specific date to the inscription.

In the absence of any tangible evidence to assign a date of fifth century B.C. to the inscription, the author seriously thought over the problem of the gap. The only argument which, according to his feelings, could help in bridging the gulf between the time of Asoka and the date of the death of Buddha was that the inscribed casket found by Peppé was not the original one enshrined by the Sakyas over their share of the relics. The inscription was simply an indicator to the earlier and original relics placed below. In this connection the remarks of Sylvain Levi that the inscription simply recalled a more ancient consecration and was probably engraved at the time of the reconstruction of the *stupa*, were quite relevant.

An analysis of the interpretation of the inscription given by various scholars revealed that the inscription referred to the relics of Buddha without an iota of doubt. Fleet also, it must be pointed out, was of the same opinion in the beginning as is evident from his first interpretation. The circumstances under which he revised his interpretation are not comprehensible. One of the reasons might be that the date of the inscription did not correspond with the date of the death of Buddha. Large number of precious objects, instead of one, found in the massive coffer might be another reason.

The first reason has no ground to stand upon, since the relations of Buddha, if the legend was taken to be authentic at all, were massacred in the life time of Buddha himself and as such preceded his death. In such circumstances as well, it was not possible to reconcile the date of the inscription with that of the massacre. In view of the consensus of scholars in general, it struck the mind of the author that the original relics might be lying somewhere below, which were missed by Peppé in 1898. The interpretation given by Sylvain Levi that the inscription recalled a more ancient consecration and was probably engraved at the time of the reconstruction of the *stupa* was very well there in support of his own feelings.

It was clear from the Buddhist texts that the Sakyas, who have been mentioned in the inscription, belonged to Kapilavastu. The location of Kapilavastu, however, continued to be unsettled. If it could be established that the site of Piprahwa, which yielded the inscription, was Kapilavastu, the doubts on the relics of Buddha would completely be razed to the ground. Hence, the author undertook further studies to find out essential clues on the identification of Piprahwa with Kapilavastu.

Because of the town's great importance in the annals of Buddhism, the precise location of Kapilavastu was for many years a great challenge to archaeologists. Though Gautama Buddha was born at Lumbini, it was in Kapilavastu that he spent his first twenty-nine years. He was a prince by birth and grew up in the palace of his father Suddhodhana, the chief of the Sakyas in sixth century B.C., amidst all the luxuries and pleasures of life, with which his father tried to divert his mind. The sights of affliction, however, kindled in the mind of the young prince the desire to free humanity from the shackles of pains and sufferings.

Thus, at the age of twenty-nine the painful feelings of life on earth forced him to abandon the worldly life by renouncing it. After practicing austerities for years together he discovered the true path to supreme knowledge and gained Enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. Thereafter he embarked on a career of teaching others what he had learnt.

The travel documents of the two Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang were very helpful in this regard. In describing the town and cities they took great care in recording their distance from one another.

Fa-hien, who visited India in A.D. 399 gives the following details regarding Kapilavastu. "Leaving the city of Sravasti, and going twelve *yojanas* to the south-east, we arrived at a town called Na-pi-ka. This is the birth place of Krakuchchanda Buddha. . . . Going north from this place less than one *yojana*, we arrive at a town where Kanakamuni Buddha was born. . . . Going eastward from this less than a *yojana*, we arrive at the city of Kapilavastu. In this city there is neither king nor people; it is like a great desert. There is simply a congregation of priests and about ten families of lay people. Fifty *li* to the east of the city is the royal garden of Lumbini; it was here the queen entered the bath to wash herself, and, having come out on the northern side, advanced twenty paces, and then holding a branch of the tree in her hand, as she looked to the east, brought forth the prince.

... The country of Kapilavastu is now a great desert; you seldom meet any people on the roads for fear of the wild elephants and the lions. It is impossible to travel negligently".¹

While proceeding from Sravasti to Kapilavastu, the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited India much later in A.D. 629 says "From this point (i.e. Sravasti) going south-east 500 *li* or so, we come to the country of Kie-pi-lo-fa-se-ti (Kapilavastu)

"This country is about 4000 *li* in circuit. There are some ten desert cities in this country, wholly desolate and ruined. Its circuit cannot be accurately measured. The royal precincts in the city measure some 14 to 15 *li* round. They were all built of brick. The foundation walls are still strong and high. It has long been deserted. The peopled villages are few and waste.

"There is no supreme ruler, each of the towns appoints its own ruler. The ground is rich and fertile, and is cultivated according to the regular season. The climate is uniform, the manners of the people soft and obliging. There are 1000 or more ruined *sangharamas* remaining; by the side of the royal precincts there is still a *sangharama* with about 30 followers in it, who study the Little Vehicle of the Sammatiya school.

"From this (i.e. from a *stupa* outside the south gate of the city) 30 *li* south-east is a small *stupa*. Here there is a fountain, the waters of which are as clean as a mirror. Here it was, during the athletic contest, that the arrow of the prince, after penetrating the targets, fell and buried itself upto the feather in the ground, causing a clear spring of water to flow forth. Common tradition has called this the arrow fountain (Sarakupa); persons who are sick by drinking the water of this spring are mostly resorted to health.

"To the north east of the arrow well about 80 or 90 *li*, we come to the Lumbini (Lavani) garden). Here is the bathing tank of the Sakyas, the water of which is bright and clear as a mirror, and the surface covered with a mixture of flowers.

"To the north of this 24 or 25 paces, there is an Asoka-flower tree, which is now decayed; this is the place where Bodhisattva was born on the

1. Samuel Beal, Buddhist Records of the Western World Vol. I, London 1906, p. XLIX

eight day of the second half of the month called Vaisakha".¹

The travel documents of the two Chinese pilgrims may appear to be at variance if they are looked into casually but, a close study of both will reveal that there is hardly any difference, so far as the location of Kapilavastu is concerned. On the basis of Hiuen Tsang's statement the distance of Lumbini from Kapilavastu was calculated to be sixteen miles by A. Fuhrer in 1896, simply to establish that Tilaurakot was Kapilavastu. The historians and archaeologists, somehow or the other, missed to note that Hiuen Tsang did not go to Lumbini straight from Kapilavastu, whereas Fa-hien did. According to the statement of Fa-hien the distance should be nine miles only, which corresponded very well with Piprahwa. Hiuen Tsang adopted a circuitous route going first to *Sarakupa* (Arrow-well) and then to Lumbini, as a result of which the distance could not be expected to be one and the same. The distance by a shorter route can always be more by a round-about but, a longer distance can never be shorter. *Sarakupa* is the place where, during an athletic exercise, the arrow shot by Buddha in his childhood pierced the ground upto the feather causing a clear spring to burst out. Since Fa-hien went straight from Kapilavastu to Lumbini, the distance recorded by him should have been considered much more valuable in locating the site.

The identification of Kapilavastu was a subject of lively discussion amongst scholars in the closing years of the last century. Concentrated efforts were made by A. Fuhrer, P.C. Mukherjee, V.A. Smith and others to locate the town, particularly after the discovery of the inscribed Asokan pillar at Lumbini and inscribed relic casket at Piprahwa in 1896 and 1898 respectively. The earlier attempts by Lassen, Cunningham, Carleyle etc., to identify Kapilavastu were nothing more than a wild goose chase. Though the inscription on the relic casket coupled with the distance from Kapilavastu to Lumbini as recorded by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien were considered by certain scholars to be adequate enough to proclaim that Piprahwa was ancient Kapilavastu, yet the declaration made by A. Fuhrer in 1896 continued to outweigh the balance in favour of Tilaurakot.

1. Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, London 1906, p. 13

In regard to Tilaurakot Fuhrer said, "The discovery of the Asokan Edict Pillar in the Lumbini grove at Rumindei enabled me to fix also, with absolute certainty, the site of Kapilavastu and of the sanctuaries in its neighbourhood. Thanks to the exact notes left by the two Chinese travellers, I discovered its extensive ruins about eighteen miles of the Lumbini pillar and about six miles north-west of Nigali Sagar in the middle of a dense *sal* forest over a length of about seven miles from the villages of Amauli, Barduli, Harnampur and Bikuli, Tilaurakot and Ramghat on the Banganga and over a breadth of about three to four miles from the villages of Rampur, Ahirauli and Srinagar on the south to the villages of Jagdishpur and Nagravah on the north. The whole site is at present as dreary and desolate as when seen by Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang, yet every sacred spot mentioned by the two pilgrims can be easily identified".¹ In support of Piprahwa being ancient Kapilavastu the reputed historian V. A. Smith said on the other hand, "My identification of the Piprahwa site with the Kapilavastu of Fa-hien rests upon the pilgrim's description of his itinerary. Professor Rhys Davids by a wholly independent line of argument arrives at the same conclusion that Kapilavastu is represented by the Piprahwa group of ruins. I am convinced that Professor Rhys Davids' argument is sound and that the *stupa* opened by Mr. Peppe really contained the relics of the Sakya sage, enshrined by his Sakya brethren shortly after his decease and cremation".²

After a systematic survey P. C. Mukherjee came to an altogether different conclusion and proclaimed Tilaurakot to be ancient Kapilavastu. He said, "It will thus be seen that no other ancient site has so much claim on the identification of Kapilavastu as Tilaura as being situated in the right position and fulfilling all other conditions".³

1. A. Fuhrer, Antiquities of the Buddha's Birth-place in the Nepalese Tarai, Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series, Vol. XXVI (Reprinted Varanasi 1972), p. 44
2. P. C. Mukherjee and V. A. Smith, Antiquities of Kapilavastu, Tarai of Nepal 1899, Archaeological Survey of India. (Reprinted Varanasi 1969), prefatory note by V. A. Smith, p. 22
3. P. C. Mukherjee and V. A. Smith, Antiquities of Kapilavastu, Tarai of Nepal 1899, Archaeological Survey of India, (Reprinted Varanasi 1969), p. 50

V.A. Smith created the greatest confusion in the identification of Kapilavastu by his ambiguous statement. While trying to reconcile the assumed difference between the travel documents of the two Chinese pilgrims Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang, he located Kapilavastu at two places. He said, "At last a process of reasoning such as I have sketched above suddenly brought me to the unexpected conclusion that Piprahwa is the Kapilavastu of Fa-Hien, whereas the city round Tilaurakot is the Kapilavastu of Hiuen Tsang".¹ The scholars, however, did not try to read between the lines and see that Smith himself was not convinced with the existence of two Kapilavastus, which is clear from his following observations, "If I am asked the reason why, in or about A.D. 406, Piprahwa was regarded as representing Kapilavastu, whereas in A.D. 635 the city on the Banganga was regarded as representing the same place, I can only reply that I do not know the reason, and plead ignorance concerning events which occurred fifteen hundred years is excusable".²

T.W. Rhys Davids came out with a new solution to resolve the so-called discrepancy between the distance furnished by the two Chinese pilgrims and remarked significantly, "The old Kapilavastu was probably at Tilaurakot. But Dr. Peppé's important discoveries at the Sakya Tope at Piprahwa may be on the site of a new Kapilavastu, built after the old city was destroyed by Vidudabha".³

W. Hoey was not prepared to accept the theory of two Kapilavastus and said that when Smith admits that the two pilgrims must have seen the same town of Krakuchhanda and Kanakamuni, his theory that they saw two different Kapilavastu was thin".⁴

W. Vost was also of the same opinion that the two pilgrims knew only one city of Kapilavastu which was Tailaurakot. He said, "The pil-

1. P.C. Mukherjee and V.A. Smith, *Antiquities of Kapilavastu, Tarai of Nepal, 1899*, Archaeological Survey of India, (Reprinted Varanasi 1969), prefatory note by V.A. Smith, p. 10

2. P.C. Mukherjee and V.A. Smith, *Antiquities of Kapilavastu, Tarai of Nepal 1899*, Archaeological Survey of India, (Reprinted Varanasi 1969), prefatory note by V.A. Smith p. 16

3. T.W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, London 1903, p. 18 fn

4. W. Hoey, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1905, p. 454

grims knew but one city of Kapilavastu, comprising Tilaurakot and the ruins to the south of it".¹

In spite of the views of so many scholars on the existence of only one Kapilavastu Smith was not prepared to change his decision. He emphatically said, "Whatever may be the correct explanation of the ascertained facts the present writer adheres to the opinion published by him in 1901, that the Piprahwa group of ruins represent the Kapilavastu of Fahian, while Tilaurakot and the neighbouring remains represent the Kapilavastu of Hiuen Tsang".²

There was no serious work on the identification of Kapilavastu in the first half of the present century. The consensus amongst the scholars that Tilaurakot was Kapilavastu made them complacent, though no concrete evidence to establish the same was available. The lull was broken in 1962 when the Government of India decided to send a delegation to explore and excavate in the *tarai* region of Nepal under the leadership of Dr. (Mrs.) D. Mitra. During the course of exploration she conducted small-scale excavations as well at a few sites like Tilaurakot and Kodan. Since she could not find any tangible evidence in the excavation at the former site to associate it with Kapilavastu, she remarked, "In case Nyagrodharma (not Nyagrodhika town) represents Piprahwa, which is not unlikely, the remains of Kapilavastu are to be sought in the mounds immediately around Piprahwa and not at the distant site of Tilaurakot".³ She further said, "In fact, the inscription on the reliquary found within the main *stupa* at Piprahwa coupled with Piprahwa's correspondence with Fa-hien's bearing and distance of Kapilavastu in relation to Lumbini raises a strong presumption for Piprahwa and its surrounding villages like Ganwari being the ancient site of Kapilavastu".⁴ It must be pointed out that the above statements of Dr. (Mrs.) D. Mitra appeared in print only after the relics of Buddha were discovered by me in 1972.

1. W. Vost, 'Identifications in the Region of Kapilavastu, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1905, p. 553
2. V.A. Smith, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. 7 edited by James Hastings. New York 1955, p. 661
3. Debala Mitra, Buddhist Monuments, Calcutta 1972, p. 253
4. Debala Mitra, Buddhist Monuments, Calcutta 1972, p. 253

A.S. Geden made a very categorical statement regarding the identification of Kapilavastu as long back as 1958 but, somehow or the other, it was completely ignored. While referring to the identification of Kapilavastu on the strength of the inscription from Piprahwa he said without an iota of doubt, "The inscription when read was understood to describe the relics enclosed in the vase as those of the Buddha himself; and it was inferred that these fragments of bone were the actual portions of the body of Gautam, preserved after cremation over which was erected the *stupa* which had now been rediscovered. Dr. Fleet, however, interprets the inscription differently; and understands it to refer, not to the founder himself, but to the Sakyas, his Kinsmen, many of whom, according to the tradition, were massacred, and their city wholly or partially destroyed, in revenge for a slight put upon the neighbouring King of Kosala. In either case the inscription would seem to carry with it the identification of Piprahwa with Kapilavastu, the capital of the Sakyas".¹

The present writer was very much anxious to visit the site of Piprahwa immediately but, according to the information available in the office, the site was not accessible during monsoon season. He had, therefore, to wait till the monsoons were over. The delay in the visit, however, was of a great help, because during this period I could collect all data and also make an in-depth study of the published references as recorded above. The detailed study of the published references convinced me that the original relics of Buddha must be lying somewhere below in the *stupa* and that there is every likelihood of Piprahwa being the site of ancient Kapilavastu of Sakyas.

No credence was given by the scholars to the distance recorded by Fa-hien under a very wrong conception. They had taken it for granted that the Sakya chief Suddhodana, father of Buddha, was a great king. They did not try to read between the lines. Suddhodana was made a great king in the later Buddhist texts which were greatly influenced by the religious sentiments of the devotees. In fact there is no difference of opinion amongst scholars on the fact that Sakya chief acknowledged the suzerainty of Kosala king Prasenjit. The idea that Buddha's father, Suddhodana, was a great king does not find a place in the oldest forms of Buddhist texts

1. A.S. Geden, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics edited by James Hastings Vol. 2. New York 1958, p. 885

presenting family traditions. "The father of Buddha", according to Watters, "was no more than a member of Sakya clan, perhaps invested with some rank or importance as a chief magistrate, although this does not appear. He may also have lived in or near a place called Kapilavastu, but he had not a palace and did not reign there".¹ Anand Coomarswamy is also of the same opinion and says, "It is only in later legends that Siddhodhana is represented as a great king; most likely he was in fact a wealthy knight and landowner".² Similar is the opinion of Oldenberg who says, "A widespread tradition represents Buddha as having been a king's son. But the idea that Buddha's father, Siddhodhana, enjoyed the royal dignity is quite foreign to the oldest forms in which the traditions regarding the family are presented to us, rather, we have nothing more or less to contemplate in Siddhodhana than one of the great and wealthy landowners of the Sakya race, whom later legends first transformed into the "Great king Siddhodhanā".³ Smith also points to the same conclusion and says, "There is no sound reason for believing that either he or his father ever enjoyed the position of regal magnificence ascribed to them by the pious imagination of later ages".⁴ The unfounded image of a great king and his capital led the scholars to search the ruins of Kapilavastu in a very extensive site. Incidentally A. Fuhrer happened to visit the site of Tilaurakot, eighteen miles from Lumbini, which fulfilled the requirements of their imagination.

1. T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India 625-645 A.D.* Vol. II, Delhi 1961, p. 3
2. Anand Coomarswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, Bombay 1958, p. 3
3. Herman Oldenberg, *Buddha, His Life, His Order, His Doctrine*, Delhi—Varanasi 1971, p. 99
4. V.A. Smith, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* edited by James Hastings Vol. 7, New York 1959, p. 660

III. STRIKING THE SPADE

When the monsoons came to a close, the author made out a programme to visit Piprahwa in the month of November 1970, with the sweet dreams of the picture I had visualised in my mind on the basis of the detailed information I could gather. I reached Birdpur, a town about 9 kms from Piprahwa, in the evening of 20th November 1970. The rest house of the irrigation department in which I along with other staff members passed the night was indeed horrifying. In the absence of any maintenance it was a rest house simply in name. The rooms were without any doors and the area was well known for undesirable activities. The rest house had no toilet facilities as well. There being no way out we passed the night in the same rest house under tense circumstances. Next morning the author and the staff members accompanying him left early for the site. After covering a distance of hardly 2 kms in the jeep they observed that it was not possible to proceed any further on account of an overflowing *nullah*. The jeep was, therefore, abandoned and the team decided to walk down the rest of the distance. Just before they reached the site a heavy downpour set in. The majestic *stupa* at Piprahwa standing in all its grandeur could be viewed from a long distance. Another mound, in the revenue jurisdiction of Ganwaria village, rising much above the surroundings, was equally visible. Containing the relics of the great Lord Buddha, the *stupa* at Piprahwa had its own magnetic attraction and on this account the heavy rain could not deter us from our destined mission. Abandoning the contemporary world, the view of the sites plunged me more than two thousand years back into history. We were completely drenched, I consi-

dered the rains to be an auspicious omen. I examined the topography of the ancient site in all details and with the background, I had in my mind as a result of my detailed study, I felt convinced that Piprahwa must be ancient Kapilavastu.

Located in a picturesque surrounding not very far from the foot of the Himalayas, Piprahwa (lat. $27^{\circ}26'30''\text{N}$; long $83^{\circ}7'50''\text{E}$) is about twenty-two kilometres north of Naugarh in Basti District of Uttar Pradesh. Naugarh is a tehsil headquarter and also a railway station on the Gorakhpur-Gonda loop line of North-eastern Railway. The ancient site of Piprahwa is only nine kilometres north of Birdpur, which falls on the road to Lumbini from Naugarh. About two decades back the road from Birdpur to Piprahwa was very well maintained under the strict vigilance of the local English landlord W.C. Peppé, who resided at Birdpur in a stately building, which has now been converted into an inspection bungalow under the charge of irrigation department of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The name of Birdpur owes its origin to Mr. R.M. Bird, who was appointed Commissioner of Gorakhpur in 1829. After Peppé left the country suddenly, in circumstances not exactly known, the road from Birdpur to Piprahwa was neglected and badly damaged by bullock carts. The condition of the road was so awful when the excavation was started in 1971 that, it was not possible to reach the site even in a jeep. The site had to be approached, after covering at least double the distance, by a canal road passing through the lakes Siswa and Majhauri. One or two heavy showers, so frequent in the area, however, rendered this road also unserviceable. On repeated appeals by the author, after the large scale excavations and identification of ancient Kapilavastu at the site, the Uttar Pradesh Government has since repaired the road. Naugarh is connected with Gorakhpur, another district of Uttar Pradesh and headquarters of North-eastern Railway, by rail and road. There is no appreciable difference in the distance by rail and road, both being a little more than seventy kilometres.

The road passes through Dhani and Pharenda from where it is almost parallel to the rail right upto Gorakhpur. With Basti, the district headquarter, Naugarh is connected only by road, the distance being about eighty kilometres. Buses ply to Naugarh both from Gorakhpur and Basti, but more frequently from the latter. The road from Basti passes through Rudhauri and Bansi. Naugarh is not the terminus of the buses, but they go

to Kakrahwa near Lumbini via Birdpur. To reach Birdpur a cycle rickshaw or tempo can also be hired from Naugarh in the absence of bus. There is no regular bus service to Piprawha at present but, a cycle rickshaw is always available at Birdpur during the day time. It is rather risky to attempt any trip after the fall of the day.

The strip of land in and around Piprahwa is level and very fertile. Producing the best quality in India, rice constitutes the chief crop of the area, where the water of the rainy season and of inundations remain long standing on the rich soil. As a matter of fact the area can be aptly called a rice bowl, because not only the best but innumerable varieties are produced there. Rice is no doubt the staple food of the people, the better varieties are meant only for export and business. Naugarh is one of the most important trade centre for rice. In the background of this level and fertile land the range of Himalaya mountains appear on the north with the black mosses of the low ranges in the foreground backed by the towering snow-capped summits. The snow-capped summits are clearly visible from the ancient site, particularly in the cold season immediately after heavy rains. Wheat and *arhar* are amongst the other crops generally grown in the area. About a decade back wheat was not at all grown in the area. During the course of excavations with effect from 1971 to 1975 it was observed by the author that the area under wheat cultivation had been increasing every year.

For proper irrigation Peppé spread a network of canals in the area, though the system no longer works properly and the cultivators have to depend entirely on the monsoons. Generally the monsoons are fairly heavy, but any failure upsets the economy of the area completely.

There are several huge lakes not far off from the ancient site. Two of them viz. Siswa and Majhauri Tal are about a kilometre to the north-east and east respectively. They are interconnected. Siswa was actually a small and shallow stream which was converted into a lake by the construction of an embankment, originally by Peppé sometime in 1864. A third reservoir known as Sagar Tal is about four kilometres to the east of the site. About six kilometres away from the site there is another lake having the same name. This lake is about a kilometre south-west of Bajha Tal which in turn is about five kilometres west of the site. All these lakes appear to have

been formed by the accumulation of rain water from the Himalayas in the low lying areas. Embankments were constructed around the water, so as to enhance the capacity and store the water for use in irrigation.

The Birdpur grant, the principal European estate, in which the ancient site of Piprahwa is situated, comprised more than two hundred fifty villages, which were originally treated as a single unit. It is only on this reckoning that Birdpur was considered to be the most thickly populated town in the entire district. The grant of Birdpur, the biggest in the district, has an interesting background. It was originally given in 1832 to Mr. J.J. MacLachlan of the firm of Alexander and Co. in Calcutta, for fifty years and the term was to expire in 1882. The firm somehow or the other failed, and in March, 1834 the property was sold to Messrs. W.F. Gibbon and J. Cock for Rs. 10,700.

In 1840 the grant was again conferred by a fresh warrant on Messrs Gibbon and Cock, with whom Messrs. H. and J.P. Gibbon were associated. This time the area of the grant was enhanced to 29,316 acres. The whole tract consisted of swamp and jungle with a very few inhabitants. As a sequel the cultivators were imported from Chota Nagpur in Bihar and Azamgarh in U.P. for growing and manufacturing indigo. This attempt proved unprofitable and was abandoned: so, too, were sugarcane cultivation, horse-breeding, and the manufacture of lac; each experiment serving merely to add to the debit. In 1848, Mr. Hugh Gibbon, the managing proprietor who had resided continuously on the estate, died from exposure and hard work in the unhealthy climate. For nearly a year his widow carried on the management. The situation improved rapidly when Mr. W. Peppé came as a manager, and subsequently married Mrs. Gibbon. He discontinued the cultivation of indigo, and gave his attention to rice, the staple product of the surrounding country. For this purpose he required many more cultivators, and these were obtained from the neighbouring parts of Oudh, from which emigrants came in great numbers, only too glad to be able to escape from the misrule of that province. Mr. Peppé made over the land to the settlers on easy terms, with the result that the jungle soon disappeared, villages sprang up, and most of the land was brought under the plough. The destruction of the forest, consisting of valuable *sal*, *asna* and other species, though regrettable in itself, was one of the conditions of the grant, and the land so cleared was subjected to

cultivation of *jarhan* rice. The only difficulty was the shortage of water in dry years, and in order to obviate this eventuality admirable system of canals was devised and carried out by Mr. Peppé and his successor, Mr. W.C. Peppé, who joined the estate in 1975.

At that time the estate was managed by Mr. F.H. Warren, the proprietors being Messrs, W.C. Peppé and G.P. Peppé, and Mrs. Larpent, children of Mr. W. Peppé; the widow of Mr. W.F. Gibbon; and Mrs. Warren and Mrs. Jones, children of Mr. Hugh Gibbon.

The above information clearly indicates that the area around the site of Piprahwa was mostly covered by forest which was removed by labour imported from outside. The local population, therefore, is not the original inhabitants of the area. Being outsiders and hired labour they were not innately interested in the development of the area and as such it is far more backward than other parts even now.

The geographical setting of Piprahwa corresponded very well with those furnished in Buddhist texts for Kapilavastu. While describing the auspicious omens that heralded the birth of Gautam Buddha, the *Lalitavistara* tells us that Kapilavastu was near enough to the slopes of the Himalaya mountains for the young lions to come prowling around it, and to stand at its gates, hailing with their roars the impending event.¹ According to the information available in other Buddhist texts, the land of the Sakyas fell between the Napalese lower ranges of the Himalayas and the middle part of the course of the Rapti, which runs through the northern parts of Oudh. The strip of land, level and fruitful extends to about fifty kilometres and is well watered by the numerous streams that issue from the Himalayas. On the east the Rohini separated the land of the Sakyas from their neighbours. On the west and south the rule of the Sakyas extended quite up, or nearly so, to the Rapti. In the land of the Sakyas between tall forests of *sal* trees, there spread out in uniform richness yellow rice fields. The rice plant constitutes the chief crop of the country, where the water of the rainy season and of inundations remain long standing on the rich soil. The importance of rice cultivation to the Sakyas

1. Buddhist Sanskrit Texts No. 1, *Lalita-Vistara* edited by P.L. Vaidya, Dharbhanga 1958, p. 57

is evident from the name of Buddha's father, 'Suddhodana', meaning pure rice. Between the rice fields we may here and there place villages in the days of the Sakyas as exist to-day, hidden among the rich, dark green foliage of mangoes and tamarinds, which surrounds the village site.

V.A. Smith gives a vivid description of Kapilavastu in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* in the following words :

"This city, according to the mythical accounts of the Buddha's royal ancestors, had been founded by the sons of an Ikṣvāku King of the Solar race. The king who reigned at Potalaka, according to some, or at Saket, according to others, yielding to the entreaties of his wife or concubine, drove his four sons into exile. These princes, accompanied by their sisters and a large retinue, went southwards, and after a long journey halted at a pleasant suitable site near the hermitage of a *rishi* (Sage) named Kapila. The *rishi* welcomed the exiles, and with solemn rite gave over to them a piece of ground on which to settle and build their city. When the city was laid out and occupied, the settlers called it in gratitude Kapilavastu or Kapilanagara, from the name of their kind patron. This happened in a period of remote antiquity. The city of Kapilavastu thus founded was, according to the generally received accounts, situated near, or at the southern slopes of the Himavat (Himalaya) mountains and in the Kingdom of Kosala. . . . It must be noticed, however, that in some of the Chinese texts the site of Kapilavastu is placed in a district to the north of the Himavat, the royal exiles being represented as having covered this range and settled on the south side of a mountain beyond. . . . But the majority of the texts is in favour of the supposition that the city was situated on or near the southern slope of the Himalaya. This position, which is indicated by the earliest Indian texts, must be accepted as the correct one, because the town, notwithstanding the mythical tales of its origin, had a real existence to the south of the mountains".¹

In the background of this picture, over the black mosses of the mountains, rise the towering snow-capped summits of the Himalayas.

With a firm conviction in my mind that Piprahwa must be ancient Kapilavastu and the relics of Buddha enshrined by the Sakyas must be lying somewhere below in the *stupa*, I returned back to my headquarters at

1. V. A. Smith, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* Vol. 7 edited by James Hastings, New York 1955, p. 659.

Patna. I made up my mind to undertake excavation at the site and with the same end in view I wrote a letter to B.B. Lal without loosing any time. While inviting his attention to the D.O. letter addressed to my predecessor, I reiterated the importance of the site without making any reference to Kapilavastu. In view of the great importance of the site I requested him to approve my programme of small-scale excavation. My proposal was readily accepted and I initiated steps for the movement of the team.

The team with meagre equipments moved on the 22nd January. After halting at Kushinagar for a day we moved to Birdpur and reached there in the evening of 25th January. The next day i.e. 26th January, being the Republic Day, the members of the team wanted a holiday. Since I had no time and was feeling restless to start the work, I forced them to work on Republic Day. For approaching the site we followed a round-about route of canal roads this time. At several places the jeep was able to move only with the help of local people. The ditches and small pools had to be levelled up. We reached the site by about 11.00 A.M. The work was planned without much loss of time and the camp set up in the mango grove, where we had taken shelter on the earlier occasion.

Regular excavation on a limited scale was started at Piprahwa on 27th January, 1971. In the beginning small trenches on the eastern, south-western and north-western fringe of the mound were laid. On the eastern fringe remains of a large quadrangular monastery built of burnt-bricks was observed. Since the excavation was on a very restricted scale, it was not possible to expose even a corner of the monastery completely. However, four stages of construction in the monastery were distinguished without any difficulty. The different stages of construction were wrongly declared by P.C. Mukherji as crypts below the flood level of the monastery. His inability to distinguish the different stages led him to believe that the monastery was double-storeyed. Charred wooden remains, spread all over the monastery, were a clear indication that it was ultimately destroyed by fire. In the absence of detailed report, particularly on the antiquities found by Mukherji, it was not possible to date the remains found by him precisely. A reference, however, was there that the monastery yielded coins of the Mitra dynasty(?) and early Kushan King in addition to iron spear-heads, door or window frame, spike and nail. During the course of excavation in 1971, the third structural phase of the

monastery could be dated to 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. on the basis of a spout of the Red Polished Ware. A unique silver punch-marked coin was a very important find but, since it was recovered from the debris lying over the monastery, it was not very much helpful in dating. The monastic cells varied in size from 5.60×3.04 to 3.25×2.95 metres.

On the south-western fringe of the mound, there were remains of a smaller monastery and votive *stupas*, which could not be exposed completely. The square basement of the votive *stupas* was an interesting feature.

Different types of burnt-brick structure were exposed in the north-western sector of the site. Of all, the most important was a huge hall paved with burnt bricks. Enclosed on all sides by a wall, the hall was square in shape with one of its side measuring 10.60 metres.

IV. RINGING THE BELLS

Religion has always acted as a great driving force in the creation of art objects in every country. Particularly is this true in India, where the energy and devotion necessary for artists to produce masterpieces was generated solely by religious zeal. India is the cradle of a number of religions, of which Buddhism was one of the earliest in the historical period.

The revolutionary precepts preached by Buddha were so appealing that, they spread throughout the country within a fairly short time. They exercised a profound influence over Buddha's followers, who were stimulated to immortalize the incidents of his life in sculpture and painting. Monumental structures were erected in his memory at the main places associated with his name. The archaeological remains of the Buddhist period revealed during excavations in different parts of the country attest to the veneration and supreme devotion of his followers. *Stupas* erected over the bodily relics of Buddha are the earliest surviving Buddhist structures.

The well-known *stupa* in which the inscribed relic casket was found presented a majestic appearance. A trench was, therefore, laid towards the western end of the *stupa* to ascertain the number of stages in which it was built. The digging revealed that the *stupa* was constructed in three stages.

When the excavation was resumed in January 1972, the work was concentrated on the *stupa*, keeping in view the statement of the reputed historian V.A. Smith, who said, "Complete excavation of the exterior of

the *stupa* is also desirable. At least one processional path must have existed, and it is possible that it was surrounded by a rail" ¹

In order to confirm the earlier evidence that the *stupa* was built in three stages, trenches on either side of the earlier one were sunk. While the *stupa* was being exposed on the western side, it was observed that in its latest form the base of the *stupa* was converted into a square. At regular intervals of 80 cms., the square base was embellished with rectangular niches, obviously meant for keeping images. Each niche measured 62 cms (height) × 52 cms (width) × 12 cms (depth). In between the niches there was a pillar made of cut-to-size bricks. Square base of a *stupa* with niches being a new feature, not observed earlier, it was further exposed on the northern side. When the work was in progress a team of scholars from Japan and Nepal, who were excavating at Tilaurakot, paid a visit to the site to ascertain the aim of the excavation. They simply ridiculed at the aim of the identification of Kapilavastu and passed unbecoming remarks under the unfounded impression that Tilaurakot in Nepal alone could be Kapilavastu. I was, however, not unnerved by their remarks and declared emphatically, "All of us are digging with the same aim. Let us see who is successful".

During the course of exposition on the northern side of the *stupa*, an earlier ring of burnt bricks, below the square base, was observed by my colleague Shri A.D.P. Singh. When I visited the camp a few days later Shri Singh was so impatient to bring his observation to my notice that, he took me immediately to the site without waiting even for a cup of tea. It was a moment of great excitement when I examined the earlier ring, which appeared to be the brick-edged outline of an earlier *stupa*.

The discovery of the earlier ring was a very good indication for earlier and original relics.

On the basis of the arc of the ring, coming out of the square base, the centre was determined and a small trench sunk in the north-eastern quadrant of the *stupa*. I left instructions with Shri Singh to dig upto the natural soil in the small trench. Though the size of the trench was very

1. V.A. Smith, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland 1898, p. 581

restricted, it revealed very interesting features. The pit dug by Peppé in 1898 could be easily observed, particularly on the section. That Peppé was satisfied with the massive stone box, which contained the inscribed casket, was apparent from the cutting. Certain concrete evidences were present before Peppé, which led him to presume that there were no relics below, though indications for them were available in the pipe, which had turned into a rectangle at the level of the bottom of the box. The pipe did not end there but, continued till the last course of the *stupa*, again in a circular shape. In this connection the statement of V.A. Smith is very pertinent. He said, "The central pipe or well is a curious feature, which is also found at Bhattiprolu and elsewhere. Mr. Peppe states that this "pipe" began at a distance of ten feet from the summit, and ran down two feet with a diameter of one foot, when it contracted to a diameter of four inches until it reached the level of the bottom of the stone coffer, when it assumed the form of a rectangle, 17 inches by 5 inches, for the depth of a single layer of bricks, and then resumed the circular pipe shape, four inches in diameter, for a further distance of two feet, when it stopped. The rectangle served as a "pointer" to the coffer".¹

At a depth of six metres from the extant top of the burnt-brick *stupa*, two burnt-brick chambers were observed in the trench sunk in the centre. The two burnt-brick chambers were separated from one another by yellow *kankary* deposit of 65 cms. The burnt-brick chambers were at a much lower level than the spot where the stone box containing the inscribed casket was found by Peppé. There was a 6 cm thick mud deposit between the last course of the *stupa* and the burnt-brick chambers. The shape of the two chambers was identical, their size being 82×80×37 cms.

The burnt-brick chambers had been observed by Shri A.D.P. Singh, when I was away from the site. I had actually left the site two or three days after the small trench for the relics was laid. On my return journey while I was spreading my bed in the first class through coach from Gorakhpur to Palezaghat (on the other side of Ganges opposite Patna and connected by steamer service), a gentleman hurriedly entered the compartment, after the train had set in motion. He happened to be a very high official in the railways with headquarters at Bombay. Being an interesting and a very

1. V.A. Smith, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1898, p. 582

social man he sought my introduction immediately after gaining normalcy following gasping. He went to details to know about the work I was doing. Acquainted with the details he came out with his keenness to visit the site of my excavation as well as Lumbini. The name of the railway official was Shri R.S. Srivastava, an engineer in the Central Railways. He had visited Gorakhpur to see his ailing father-in-law, Shri Kesho Prasad, a renowned advocate. I told him about the date of my next visit and he assured me to adjust his programme accordingly. We both went to Lumbini first with his three daughters in the office vehicle and by the time we reached Piprahwa, the sun had started slipping his glorious face behind the western skies. When I reached the site Shri Singh appealed to me to get down into the trench in the twilight to study the two burnt-brick chambers. They developed full confidence in me for the original relics to which I was approaching in a planned manner.

The specific purpose of the chambers to keep certain sacred objects was quite evident from the nature of their construction. Two burnt bricks, having a size of 40×27 cms each, in three courses were placed one above the other on the top. Below the third course there was a mud deposit $7\frac{1}{2}$ cms thick and further below bricks slightly longer with width reduced to half were used. The size of these bricks was $42 \times 13 \times 7$ cms. Some of these bricks were placed in brick-on-edge position, as if to close anything in a box.

I waited for the photographer for a day, so as to record the position and nature of the two burnt-brick chambers before proceeding further to open them. After recording them I started opening the northern chamber in the first instance under feelings of great sensation. Small knives were collected and the bricks were removed very carefully, lest the contents inside the chambers got damaged.

When three courses of brick laid one above the other were removed with great care, the pinnacle of a soapstone casket came to light. I started removing the hard packing material, so as to expose the entire casket for photograph. During the process a small portion of pinnacle of the casket was damaged. The same, however, was repaired. By the side of the casket and separated by a brickbat, one dish in red colour was observed. The dish was covered by another dish of the same type.

The covering dish had broken into three pieces in such a manner that all the three fragments appeared like covering individual compartments containing relics. Both the soapstone casket and the dish were so carefully packed in between bricks and brickbats that it was rather difficult to remove them from their position without breaking. The maximum diameter of the casket was 7 cms, whereas of the dish 26 cms. The height of the casket was 12 cms. It contained charred bones. The relic casket came to light on 20th March 1972.

The exposition of the soapstone casket and the dishes were photographed at each and every stage, so as to project the authenticity and also for record. They were not removed from their position till I was satisfied that the exposures were correct. The team working at the site could not leave the site also with the precious objects *in situ*. We, therefore, decided to have our lunch in the trench itself. Films could be developed only in the night and as such all of us had our dinner also in the same trench. The sacred objects were removed from their position only at about 23.00 hrs, when I was completely satisfied with the photographs. On the following day the same exercise was repeated on the southern chamber.

The position of the casket and dishes was slightly different in the southern brick chamber. Two dishes of the same type and size, as found in the northern chamber, were noticed side by side immediately below the topmost course of the brick. Both the dishes were shattered to fragments on account of the lapse of time as also the weight above them. They could be removed from their position only in very small pieces. When two further courses of brick were removed another soapstone casket with the lid broken into three pieces came to light. This soapstone casket was bigger in size, the maximum diameter being 9 cms and height 16 cms. Like the other casket this was also packed perfectly between bricks and brickbats. Since the lid of the casket had broken, it got filled up completely with earth. On removal of the earth carefully, charred bones were found inside. Having remained in mud for a long time, the colour of the bones had turned yellowish. Photographs at each and every stage were repeated in the southern chamber as well but, on an assurance from the photographer regarding good negatives, I did not wait for the night and removed the sacred objects in the day itself.

The great care that had been taken to make the caskets perfectly

symmetrical attested the skill of the craftsmen who shaped the soapstone on the lathe. Though the surface of the caskets is very smooth, the striation marks caused by the lathe can be made out. The caskets are made in two parts, the body of the container with a broad base, and a lid to fit closely on the top. The shape is very similar to that of a *stupa*.

Further excavation in the area established that the fresh relic caskets could be dated to 5th-4th centuries B.C. i.e. earlier in date than the inscribed relic casket discovered by Peppé at a higher level in 1898. The finding of earlier caskets proved that the *stupa*, in which they were found, was built by the Sakyas over their share of the relics in the first instance. They were further an adequate and tangible evidence to establish that Piprahwa was ancient Kapilavastu. The scholars, however, were not prepared to accept the same in the absence of any inscription. The fresh relic caskets were devoid of any inscription. The excavation was, therefore, planned for the following season of 1972-73 with the primary objective of unearthing an inscriptional evidence to confirm the belief that Piprahwa was ancient Kapilavastu. Wooden boxes were prepared at the site to pack the caskets and dishes and transport them to Patna. My family members, particularly my children, were always very anxious to know the outcome of my search. Whenever I returned from the site they used to rush to the stairs and enquire about the results. My residence was just above the office premises on the first floor. On all previous occasions they were very much disappointed to hear a despairing note from me, but this time all of them burst into joy when they received an answer in affirmative.

In 1972-73 the eastern monastery, a part of which was exposed in the first year, was subjected to excavation. Its majestic appearance was a very good ground to expect inscriptional evidence from it. The reputed historian V.A. Smith had also expected some important evidence from the eastern monastery. He said, "The building east of the *stupa* is undoubtedly a monastery. It is desirable that both it and the small structure north of the *stupa* should be fully excavated. Some small objects of interest will probably be found, and inscriptions may probably turn up".¹

¹ Smith, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1898.

After a large area of the eastern monastery was excavated Lal Chand Singh, my colleague, felt very much disappointed, because no inscriptional evidence was forthcoming. Overwhelmed by disappointment he visited Patna to see me. He had lost all hopes for any inscription with the legend Kapilavastu and the same was expressed by him candidly before me. The day was 13th March, 1973. The sentiments and feelings of my colleague did not unnerve me, because the grace of my spiritual teacher had developed full confidence in me that inscriptional evidence would certainly come to light. The confidence was further strengthened at Mysore when I paid a visit to the famous Chamundi Devi temple. I had gone to Mysore in January 1973 in connection with the meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology.

On that occasion an exhibition of excavated antiquities was also organised and the fresh relic caskets discovered by me found a prominent place in it. In the absence of any inscription on the casket the scholars were not prepared to consider Piprahwa as Kapilavastu. In such circumstances I visited the Chamundi Devi temple along with other friends and colleagues. All my colleagues decided to sit at a suitable place in the temple and meditate. I also took part in it. During the course of meditation someone appeared to be whispering in my ears that an inscription deciding the location of Kapilavastu would certainly come to light. Armed with all the confidence I boldly exhorted Shri Lal Chand Singh, "Why you have lost all hopes. What will happen tomorrow, nobody knows. Moreover we have yet to excavate a large area. Go and resume the excavations."

Lal Chand Singh rushed back to the camp and resumed the excavation. The holy festival Holi happened to occur on the 17th March and the work was kept suspended on that day. It is customary in Northern India to enjoy the intoxicating drink of '*Bhang*' on that day. Shri Singh in honour of the tradition arranged for the sacred juice said to have been enjoyed by Lord Siva. All the members of the camp were down in the evening under the influence of the intoxication of Lord Siva. Next day i.e. on 18th March when the excavation work was resumed the members were not completely free from intoxication. It was not more than two hours when the work started that a labour came with a small terracotta object to show to Krishna Nanda Tripathi, one of the supervisors. Tripathi could observe some letters on the object, but he could not read them. He, therefore,

carried the same to Lal Chand Singh who did not lose any time in reading the line in which Kapilavastu was clearly written. The object was a terracotta sealing.

The terracotta sealing with the legend Kapilavastu was found, when the cells and the central courtyard on the northern axis of the monastery were being cleared. I reached the site of rediscovered Kapilavastu on the 19th March i.e. just a day after the first inscriptional evidence of Kapilavastu was found. More than thirty sealings were collected in the season from depths ranging between 1.05 and 1.75 metres. It must be emphasised that the sealings were not found in a hoard, but were picked up from different levels and spots. The sealings could be divided into three groups. One of them is inscribed in four lines, which were read as, '*Om, Devaputra Vihare, Kapilavastu, Bhikhu Sanghas.*' The inscription on the second series is limited to three lines, which are '*Maha, Kapilavastu, Bhikshu Sanghas*'. The third group of sealings carried the name of a monk. The sealings were generally round, though a few of them are oval as well.

The letters on the sealings are in Brahmi characters of first-second centuries A.D. In the year 1974 the monastery yielded more sealings and a lid of a pot carrying the same inscription as the first group.

The terracotta sealings, and above all the lid of the pot with the legend Kapilavastu, found during the course of excavation at Piprahwa, clinched the identification of Kapilavastu, a long standing controversy, conclusively. The sealings also established that the monastery, in which they occurred, was meant for the order of monks at Kapilavastu. Further, the word '*Devaputra*', indicated that the monastery was enlarged in the third stage by the Kushan King, Kanishka, who extended great patronage to the religion of Buddhism. That the *stupa* at Piprahwa was erected in its initial stages by the Sakyas of Kapilavastu over the corporeal relics of Buddha was also settled by the sealings.

V. PUBLICITY

The finding of the relics of Buddha and the following identification of ancient Kapilavastu were epoch-making discoveries, but unfortunately they did not receive the publicity they deserved. After the discovery of the relics of Buddha in 1972 a high official of the Archaeological Survey of India was deputed by the Director General, B.B. Lal to verify the details. The official deputed for the purpose appeared to be a little prejudiced because, right from the beginning of his visit he adopted an attitude of condemnation. He was, somehow or the other, not prepared to be convinced by the arguments on the earlier and original relics of Buddha. When we visited the site and got down in the small trench in which the relics were found, he raised all possible questions against my standpoint. I did my best to convince him with my arguments, but they were of no avail, because the gentleman had probably determined not to accept my view-point. As a last resort I tried to explain to him that the relics were found at a level far below that in which the massive stone coffer was found. In addition to that there was an intervening deposit of 6 cms of mud between the burnt-brick chambers and the last course of the burnt brick *stupa*. The huge box was found much above the last course of the burnt brick *stupa*. He did not show any inclination to be convinced and as such told me that the intervening mud deposit of 6 cms did not appear to be an occupational deposit. I was simply surprised at the argument and could not control my emotions. I asked the gentleman in a little annoyed tone, "Mr. . . . you are searching an occupational layer in a burial". Though my statement was not palatable to him, he said that my view-point could be taken to be

ninety percent correct. I exclaimed immediately that since the excavated area was very much restricted, further excavations were essential to remove the inkling of doubt.

The high official was deputed simply to verify the discovery and give a press release. Before parting with the gentleman at Gorakhpur railway station on my way back, I expressly asked him about the time when the press release could be expected. He assured me to release the news immediately after his return to New Delhi. Since the gentleman did not appreciate my arguments, he quietly sat over the information for a considerably long time. After great persuasion a small news item appeared, which in fact did not give any importance to the discovery of the fresh relics. No head and tail could be made out of the news item. I was anyhow helpless in the matter. I did not like to file any protest before the Director General, B.B. Lal.

B.B. Lal left the Survey on pre-mature retirement on 9th June 1972 and the charge was taken over by M.N. Deshpande. In March 1973 when the terracotta sealings with the legend Kapilavastu were found to establish the identification, the sensational discoveries were communicated to him. A press conference to release the news was arranged by him after obtaining consent of the Ministry of External Affairs. The consent of the External Affairs Ministry was essential on account of the fact that Tilaurakot, earlier regarded as Kapilavastu, was in Nepal. It was a question of delicate relationship between two neighbouring countries. I very well remember the day when N.R. Banerjee took me to the External Affairs Ministry to seek permission. The Deputy Secretary of the Ministry hugged me and remarked, "I wish I had been in your position and made the discovery."

After obtaining the required permission the press conference was arranged in the office of the Director General on the Janpath on 12th April, 1973. A correct picture of the discovery was, however, not presented before the correspondents. Instead of accepting the identification of Kapilavastu once and for all, doubts were allowed to hang on. This will be apparent from the following news item published in the Indian Express, New Delhi edition, on the 13th April under the heading 'New clues found to Kapilavastu site'.

"Has the 3000-year old lost city of Kapilavastu finally been found?"

The discovery of 31 seal impressions barely three weeks ago in the ruins of a Buddhist monastery at Piprahwa in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh has brought archaeologists to the brink of answering that question with an exciting "yes". The rough little terracotta "sealings" are the first ever found with inscriptions containing the name of the capital of the Sakya rulers, whose fame their great prince, Gautama the Buddha, has ensured for posterity.

"The legends on the sealings say 'Maha Kapilavastu Bhikshu Sanghasya' and 'Om Devaputra Vihare Kapilavastu Bhikshu Sanghasya'—identifying the owners and users of the seals as the monks of 'viharas' in Kapilavastu. They are about 1800 years old. Simple little clues to the existence of inconspicuous monastic orders of the First and Second centuries A.D., living out their pious span where nothing moves now but the wind-tossed Pipal trees. And dramatic clues to the location of the city they casually mention. Experts of the Archaeological Survey of India are now preparing to explore the mounds near the ruined monastery where the sealings lay awaiting the probing hand of chance. They think they will uncover Kapilavastu.

"According to Mr. M.N. Deshpande, Director-General of the Archaeological Survey who announced the new "finds" to-day, these are not the first clues to the likelihood of Piprahwa turning out to be the ancient Sakya capital. The site first came to light in 1897, when W. Peppé, zamindar of Birdpur excavated a brick stupa and found the relic caskets in a stone chamber inside it. The lid of one of the caskets bore a Brahmi inscription. "It was here that the corporeal relics of the Buddha were laid to rest by the Sakya brethren

"The "rival" Kapilavastu site thrown up by 19th and 20th century exploration of the area is Tilaurakot, about 12 miles away across the border in Nepal. The past of Tilaurakot was first explored in 1898, two years after the Lumbini inscription was discovered, the remains of fortifications were found there in the Spring of 1899—recalling the old accounts of Kapilavastu's fortified walls "18 cubits high" (about 27 feet). But further intensive excavation and study of Tilaurakot in 1961 by Mrs. D.Mitra, Director of Monuments at the Survey headquarters, showed that the site has nothing dating back further than the third century B.C. So the searchlight of history has turned towards Piprahwa.

"The discovery of the 31 sealings has come at the end of three seasons of excavation and survey. The credit for these dramatic "finds" goes to the team led by Dr. K.M. Srivastava, Superintending Archaeologist of the mid-eastern circle of the Archaeological Survey. Now more "digs" are stated to be begun. Experts of the Archaeological Survey explained today that in the slow process of piecing together history from its tangible remains, every new discovery rewrites the past a little, sometimes cancelling out what has been written before. Will the scheduled excavations in the terai near Lumbini finally erase the 75-year-old claims of Tilaurakot? The answer must wait till the mounds of Piprahwa reveal their secrets."

The news item in National Herald of 13th April 1973 appeared under the heading 'Kapilavastu was in U.P.? The question mark was a little intriguing. The contents of the news item given below were more or less on the same lines as it appeared in Indian Express, but it was accompanied by a map.

"The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) claims to have unearthed Buddhist relics that might settle an archaeological dispute over the location of Kapilavastu the capital city of Sakyas.

"Kapilavastu, the sixth century B.C. township was, believed to be buried under Tilaurakot, a Nepal village some 15 miles from the Indian border. Mr. M.N. Deshpande the ASI Director General, told newsmen today that recent excavations provided "the most plausible evidence to conclude that Kapilavastu could have been at Piprahwa, in U.P. which is about two miles from the Nepal border.

"The archaeological finds unearthed at Piprahwa late last month are in the form of 31 sealings of terracotta dating back to the first century A.D., the sealings belonged to the order of the monks of the Kapilavastu living in Devaputra Vihara.

"According to Mr. Deshpande, the Archaeological Survey of India would take on excavations in the vicinity of Piprahwa in a bid to establish the precise location of Kapilavastu.

"The dispute over the location of Kapilavastu dates back to 1899 when a PWD Surveyor, P.C. Mukherjee explored the region around Lumbini and fixed the location of Kapilavastu at Tilaurakot some sixteen

miles from Lumbini.

"The belief was not effectively challenged till 1961, when Mrs. D. Mitra, the ASI Director of Monuments, was deputed to train some staff members of the Nepalese Archaeological Department. The Indo-Nepal excavation team chose to dig up an area near Lumbini.

"Mrs. Mitra found some clues that pointed to the possible location of Kapilavastu in the vicinity of Piprahwa. It was not until 1971 that an ASI team led by Mr. K.M. Srivastava, Superintending Archaeologist, chose to dig up a site at Piprahwa"

The news of the discovery was published in the Statesman of New Delhi a day late i.e. on 14th April, 1973. The text of the news was similar to those which appeared in the other two papers but for the following categorical statement. "According to the Director General of the Archaeological Survey, Mr. M.N. Deshpande, such a large number of sealings proved that the monastery "devaputra vihara", a quadrangular brick structure belonged to a Kapilavastu order of monks—and the stupa's association with the Sakyas, already known from the Brahmi inscription—on one of the caskets found in it would be considered to be confirmed." The news item appeared under the heading 'Site of Sakya Capital: Excavation in U.P. District may lead to Ancient City'.

In the meeting with the press representatives, one of the correspondent put across Shri M.N. Deshpande a very pertinent question. He asked, "When it was felt in 1962 that Piprahwa was ancient Kapilavastu, why no excavations were undertaken till 1971". Shri M.N. Deshpande gave an interesting answer in the following words "When a capable man like Mr. Srivastava was posted in the Circle in 1970 the work was taken up".

The news of the important discovery of sealings and relics was covered and relayed both by the television and radio.

VI. THE STUPA

The key architectural form of early Indian Buddhism was *stupa*, though of course it had a beginning much earlier than the time of Buddha. *Stupas* were an object of great adoration and worship for Buddhists, particularly in earlier stages when image worship had no place in the religion. The *stupa*, a solid hemispherical mound, served as a substitute for Gautama Buddha and in its earliest forms contained almost invariably his relics. With an humble beginning in the form of a mound, the *stupas* developed into a structure of massive proportions.

According to *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, Buddha directed his chief disciple Ananda to construct *stupas* at the crossing of four highways over his bodily relics after cremation in the same fashion as the *stupa* of a universal king. The manner in which the remains of Tathagata should be treated was explained to the Mallas of Kusinara in the following words.

“They wrap the body of a king of kings. Ananda, in a new cloth. When that is done they wrap it in corded cotton wool. When that is done they wrap it in a new cloth,—and so on till they have wrapped the body in five hundred successive layers of both kinds. Then they place the body in an oil vessel of iron, and then build a funeral pile of all kinds of perfumes, and burn the body of the king of kings. And then at the four cross roads they erect a dagaba to the king of kings. This, Ananda, is the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings.

“And as they treat the remains of a king of kings, so, Ananda, should they treat the remains of the Tathagata. At the four cross roads a dagaba should be erected to the Tathagata.

“And whosoever shall there place garlands or perfumes or paint, or make salutation there, or become in its presence calm in heart — that shall long be to them for a profit and joy”.¹

The *stupa* at Piprahwa was subjected to detailed examination in 1973-74, as it happened to be one of the earliest so far discovered in India. In addition to that the *stupa* yielded the relics of Buddha. A cutting through the *stupa* revealed three stages of construction.

Phase I. In the first stage a tumulus was raised by piling up natural earth dug up from the surrounding area. The maximum diameter of the tumulus was 38.90 metres, whereas the height 0.75 metre. In flush with the top of the mound as also in the centre two burnt-brick chambers were constructed to keep the sacred relics received by the Sakyas as their share at Kusinara after cremation of Lord Buddha.

A structure of twelve courses of brick was raised over the two burnt-brick chambers. In between the structure and the chambers there was a mud deposit varying between three to six centimetres. This mud was of the same nature as used in the mud tumulus. The height of the twelve courses of structure was 0.90 metre in all. Two additional bricks were observed at the edge of the structure all round. These bricks were an indication of the working level of the burnt-brick structure as well as *pradakshinapath* of the first stage. The distance of the *pradakshinapath* from the main structure was 5.20 metres. The width of the *pradakshinapath* was two metres. It was paved with brick-bats enclosed by a single line of complete brick. The *pradakshinapath* joined the raised mound just at the point where the slope was abrupt. Bricks of the size of 42 x 27 x 7 cms. were generally used in the *pradakshinapath* as well as in the structure, though of course a limited number of bricks of the size of 40 x 27 x 7 cms. were also used.

During the course of excavation the top of the structure was observed to be flat, but it could not be said in absolute terms that it was not disturbed in the second phase. It is quite likely that the hemispherical top of the *stupa* was levelled up to facilitate reconstruction in the second stage.

The relics found inside the two burnt-brick chambers belonged to phase I of the *stupa* when they were enshrined by the Sakyas over their share.

Phase II. — Compact yellowish clay not very much different from the natural soil was filled up above the two brick courses projecting from the structure of the first phase. The thickness of this deposit was 50 cms. In a meagre quantity brickbats were also mixed up with the deposit which was sloping towards the side approaching the *pradakshinapath*. The slope was abrupt at the brick-edged outline of the *pradakshinapath*. A 35 cm. thick deposit of brickbats and debris above the clay deposit was noticed. The deposit was also sloping and striking against the brick-edged outline. Again the deposit of brickbats and debris was superimposed by a blackish clay mixed with pebbles and lime. This was the working level of the second stage of the *stupa*. In the second stage of the *stupa* there were two *pradakshinapaths*, which were in use either simultaneously or the second one was built after a lapse of time. The nature of construction and the position of the *pradakshinapath* in the first phase of the *stupa* was repeated in the second stage with an intervening deposit of 85 cms. of clay and debris (i.e. both were one above the other). For the construction of the second *pradakshinapath*, in the second phase, quite close to the *stupa*, a brick-on-edge in a slanting position was inserted as a line of demarcation as also to provide some strength to the *pradakshinapath*. For setting up the brick-on-edge the lower layer was further deepened. The top of the brick-on-edge was in line with the bottom most course of the *pradakshinapath*. The second *pradakshinapath* was only 1.44 metres away from the *stupa*.

The *stupa* in the second stage of construction had two tiers. There was a projection from the main dome, which measured 1.52 metres. The maximum number of courses of burnt brick used in the second phase was forty-five, the total height being 4.55 metres. Bricks of the size of 40 x 27 x 7 cms. were used in the second phase. The dome was 19 metres in diameter. The entire reconstruction of Phase II i.e. dome and projection of the tier rested on the twelve courses of brick of Phase I.

The massive sandstone coffer containing the inscribed casket found by Peppe¹ in 1898 was of the second phase.

Phase III. In the third phase a new feature was introduced in the *stupa*. The base of the *stupa* was converted into a square from a circular one. One side of the square measured 23.50 metres. The space between the drum of the *stupa* of the second phase and the square base was filled up

with bricks and brickbats in a receding fashion towards the base. The two-tier system of the *stupa* in the second phase was encased with the help of this filling and a domical appearance above the square base was visible. The height of the *stupa* as also the diameter of the dome were increased. Thirteen courses of brick were added over the *stupa* of the second phase and the diameter was raised to 23 metres from 19. The total height of the burnt-brick courses of the *stupa* was raised to 6.35 metres. Bricks used in the third phase varied in measurements from 38 to 40 x 29 to 26 x 8 to 7 cms. Some of the bricks were wedge-shaped.

The square base of the *stupa* was embellished by rectangular niches at regular intervals of 80 cms. Each niche was of the size of 62 cms (height) x 52 cms (width) x 12 cms (depth). In between the niches one pillar made out of cut and moulded bricks was provided. The plinth of the square base was 1.16 metres high including the niche. In all twenty courses were used in the plinth, nine of them below the niche. In order to present a beautiful appearance, moulded bricks were used in the top two courses below the niche.

The niches were meant to keep sculptures during Kushan period, when Buddha was deified and image worship was introduced. Unfortunately not a single sculpture could be found during excavation.

In the third phase of construction only one casket of soapstone was kept. It was found by 'Peppe' in a completely smashed condition at a depth of ten feet only.

There was a platform-like structure on the eastern side between the *stupa* and the *pradakshinapath* of the second phase. It was 1.20 metres square. The platform might have been constructed to place objects of worship over it. In the earliest stages the main worship was probably performed on the southern side, where a rectangular enclosure made of burnt bricks-on-edge was encountered. The enclosure was 1.30 x 0.85 metres in area. Just outside the entrance of the southern monastery a burnt brick pathway connecting the monastery with the *stupa* was a novel feature. The brick-paved pathway, which touched the rectangular enclosure, was 6.00 x 4.00 metres.

The architectural features of the *stupa* described above are of immense importance to the scholars, particularly because it can be declared without the least doubt that the *stupa* at Piprahwa is the first

authentic *stupa* out of the ten erected immediately after the demise of Lord Buddha. They have added a new dimension to the study of the development of *stupa* architecture not only because of the early date of the *stupa*, but also on account of the later reconstructions and developments.

A general consensus amongst the scholars prevailed that there were no burnt-brick structures in the pre-Mauryan period. Being too rigid in their belief, they were not prepared to change their views. In the same strain of thought, it was accepted at all hands that the construction of burnt-brick *stupa* had its origin only during the time of Asoka who patronized the religion of Buddhism with a great zeal. The rigidity amongst the scholars was not without reason. Very little attention was paid to the excavation of *stupas* with a view to understand their architectural features and later development. The excavations happened to be more or less in the form of a shaft bored in the centre which, besides yielding reliquary, did not contribute to the knowledge of the date and the earliest burnt brick activity. It was also not helpful in revealing the style and development of *stupa* architecture.

The Ramabhar *stupa* at Kushinagar is considered to have been constructed to mark the spot where Lord Buddha was cremated after *Mahaparinirvana*. While digging in the centre of the *stupa*, Hirananda Sastri came across a platform-like structure of burnt bricks at a depth of five feet below water level. He said, "After having found the centre I sank a shaft with a radius of 2' to about 5' below the water level which was reached at 48' from the top of the eastern portion of the *stupa*. At water level and towards the west of the centre I noticed a brick flooring and corners of wallings, but these proved to be nothing but foundation walls".¹ No attempt was made by Sastri to cut against the *stupa* in order to establish the exact purpose and chronological horizon of the flooring.

The *stupa* at Vaisali revealed five phases. In the earliest phase the *stupa* was made up of piled mud. Each layer of the piled-up mud was separated by a thin layer of *kankar* and clay. The mud *stupa* was encased in bricks later on during the time of Asoka.² According to the excavator the

1. Hirananda Sastri, *Excavation at Kasia*, Archaeological Survey of India Report 1910-11, Calcutta 1914, p. 70

2. *Indian Archaeology, A Review 1957-58*, New Delhi, pp 10 and 11

earliest phase must be pre-Mauryan on account of a few Chunar sandstone fragments found in the debris of the second phase. The *stupa* was completely exposed from the top. In the absence of superstructure over the mud tumulus, different phases of construction could be observed only at the ends. Various phases of construction were not distinguished on a common section. It cannot, therefore, be said for certainty that no burnt-brick structure existed over the mud tumulus in the earliest stage.

The excavation conducted at the *stupa* of Piprahwa has established beyond doubt that the use of burnt bricks started in pre-Mauryan times, particularly because of the two burnt-brick chambers in which the caskets containing the corporeal relics were kept.

A number of scholars have raised doubts regarding the three phases of the *stupa*. They feel that the relic caskets found in the two burnt-brick chambers and the massive coffer containing the inscribed casket and found by Peppe' were kept at one and the same time. Besides stratigraphical distinction, the most tangible evidence against this view is the circular pipe observed by Peppe' which turned into a rectangle at the level of the base of the massive coffer. The rectangle again turned into a circular shape and continued till the bottom-most course of the burnt-brick *stupa*. Had the coffer and the two burnt-brick chambers been contemporary the shape of the circular pipe would not have changed. Another concrete evidence is the level of the *pradakshinapath* of the first phase which is at a much lower level than that of the second phase. A *pradakshinapath* will never be at a lower level than that of the working level of the *stupa*. The scholars should also take into account the fact that one of the caskets in the coffer was inscribed. If the caskets contained in the burnt-brick chamber and the coffer were placed at one and the same time why the caskets of the burnt-brick chamber remained uninscribed? Further, the scholars will have to reconsider the date of the inscription and reconcile it with the date of the death of Buddha. A press correspondent of Sri Lanka pointed out that the caskets placed in the burnt-brick chamber might have contained the relics of some Buddhist saint, because the inscription on the casket found by Peppe' left no doubt that the same contained the relics of Buddha. Does it not appear ridiculous to believe that the relics of Buddha will be solemnised over the relics of another Buddhist saint in one and the same *stupa*? The idea is beyond any comprehension. The inscribed casket recalled a more ancient consecration and was placed on the occasion of the reconstruction of the *stupa*.

While arriving at the general consensus of non-existence of burnt-brick structures in pre-Mauryan times, two factors were mainly taken into account by the archaeologists. The first one was the occurrence of the Northern Black Polished Ware. Though the N.B.P. has been dated between 600 and 200 B.C. in Northern India, particularly in Gangetic basin, the archaeologists were somehow or the other inclined to assign a later date to the burnt-brick structures. While doing so, they bore in their mind the illustrious rule of the Mauryas, specially Asoka, during whose regime the limits of the Mauryan Empire extended to the extreme south. Secondly, the archaeologists always worked under an impression that the revolutionary change to burnt brick could be brought about only under the patronage of great rulers.

Denying the existence of burnt-brick structure in pre-Mauryan times Ghosh emphatically said, "At most sites where evidence exists, burnt-brick came into vogue either in the late phase of the Northern Black Polished Ware or more commonly, in a still later phase".¹

He said further, "Evidence is thus complete that burnt-brick became popular very well after the appearance of the Northern Black Polished Ware; it became common only in the second century B.C. and abundant even later on. The early cities were contented with mud and mud-brick structure where stone was not available, with the possibility of wooden structures, the remains of which have not survived."²

Though a large number of sites were subjected to excavation during the last three decades, the primary aim had been to ascertain the cultural sequence of the site by digging a limited area vertically. Very little attention was paid to undertake horizontal excavation, in order to expose the planning of a city or township. There was no justification in making a firm declaration only on the basis of a restricted area of excavation, particularly when the use of burnt brick has been reported from pre-Mauryan levels. During the course of excavation at Hastinapur brickbats were encountered in Period II dated between 1100 and 800 B.C. The excavator said, "In Period II, although no regular house-plans, excepting a few mud or mud-brick walls, were met with, there is some evidence in the shape of

1. A. Ghosh, *The City in Early Historical India*, Calcutta 1973, p. 68



brickbats to show the use of kiln-burnt bricks. Of Period III, only six structures were exposed, two of which were drains and one barn."¹ Period III of Hastinapur has been dated between 600 and 200 B.C. and it must be pointed out that one of the drains mentioned above was laid in the earliest occupational layer of the Period.

Notwithstanding the use of burnt brick in the pre-Mauryan period at Hastinapur the archaeologists never took into consideration progress and development as a natural process. Certain basic necessities called upon by nature and circumstances were completely ignored. The ancient site of Piprahwa is located in a region, where rainfall is very heavy resulting in regular inundation. In such circumstances was it not necessary to switch over to the use of burnt bricks? The call of circumstances has been very well established at the adjoining site Ganwaria, identified as the town site of Kapilavastu. Reference to heavy rainfall in and around Kapilavastu finds a place in the earliest Buddhist texts as well. In the earlier stages the inhabitants of the township lived in houses of mud walls of which the roofs were supported on wooden posts. The occupation was a victim of regular inundation as a result of which the mud walls were badly damaged. In order to get rid of the constant scourge, the inhabitants built high platforms of compact clay for occupation, which again was not free from destruction. The circumstances, therefore, forced the inhabitants to find a way out in making the use of burnt brick in their structures. Regular construction of burnt-brick structures on a fairly large scale was initiated in layer (10) of Period II, which has been dated between 600 and 200 B.C. Layer (12) was the earliest occupational level of Period II characterized by the Northern Black Polished Ware at the site. It continued to occur till layer. (6). The burnt-brick structures at the site cannot, therefore, be later than the later half of sixth century B.C. In any case they are pre-Mauryan.

In the light of the recent findings at Piprahwa and Ganwaria, the archaeologists should reconsider the view held so far, that structures of burnt brick were not known in pre-Mauryan times. Piprahwa and Ganwaria are part and parcel of the same complex of ancient Kapilavastu. The

1. B.B. Lal, *Ancient India* Nos. 10 and 11 (Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India) New Delhi 1954-55, p. 106

occupation at Ganwaria, the main township had a much earlier beginning in eighth century B.C. The occupation at Piprahwa started only after the corporeal relics of Buddha were enshrined in the *stupa* for worship, after His *Mahaparinirvana*. Monasteries were also constructed to enable the monks to stay there. As a general practice, *stupas* are not clubbed together with the main township.

The capital of the sixteen republics held a much more significant position in the history of ancient India than Kapilavastu. Excavation on a large scale should, therefore, be undertaken at some of these sites with the primary aim of establishing the date of the beginning of burnt-brick structures in North India. In this context the use of burnt bricks in the revetment of the rampart belonging to Structural Phase III of Period I and other burnt-brick structures raised in pre-Mauryan times at Kausambi must be borne in mind.¹

Interpretation of the Inscription

Without going into the details of the merits and demerits of the various interpretations presented by different scholars, the author made an attempt to analyse the inscription in the light of the recent work and discoveries at Piprahwa. The analysis was confined to two main issues, namely the date of the inscription and the actual information conveyed by it.

Buhler always remained on the look out for some evidence or the other to push back the early use of writing in India. He, therefore, declared the inscription vaguely to be anterior to Asoka, during whose time writing is said to have been introduced in the country in the third century B.C. Buhler unfortunately died before giving an account of the reasons, which led him to push back the date so early. There could be only two reasons. Firstly, the absence of signs for lengthened vowels and secondly, his interpretation of the inscription. Though a number of scholars considered the first ground to be adequate enough to assign an earlier date, it cannot be justified. Notation of long vowels is generally neglected

1. G.R. Sharma, *The Excavations at Kausambi* (1957-59), Allahabad 1960, pp. 22 and 27 to 33

of early records. It is entirely absent from one of the inscriptions of Ramgarh Hill, but no scholar has tried to assign it a date prior to Asoka. With one single exception the sign is equally absent from the copper plate inscription of Sohgauna.

According to Buhler's interpretation of the inscription, as already mentioned, the relics contained in the inscribed soapstone vase were of Buddha, which the Sakyas of Kapilavastu received as one-eighth share at Kusinara after his cremation. There being a wide gap between the date of the death of Buddha in 483 B.C. and the time of Asoka, Buhler was not in a position to reconcile his interpretation without declaring the inscription to be anterior to Asoka. He was, however, very cautious in not assigning a specific date to the inscription.

Taking into consideration all the details mentioned above and the discovery of fresh relic caskets of an earlier date, there is hardly any basis, now, to justify that the inscription is anterior to the time of Asoka, or as early as the date of the death of Buddha. The next issue is the purport of the inscription. In order to understand the inscription in proper perspective, it is necessary to recall that the massive stone coffer found by Peppé in 1898 contained five caskets. During the course of excavation by the author as well, five vessels, two soapstone caskets and three dishes, were observed to be embedded in the two burnt brick chambers. The identical number of five in both the cases must have a bearing on the meaning of the inscription. The five vessels cannot be said to contain mortal remains of five different individuals, because this presumption would lead to an unnatural belief that all the five died at one and the same time. It is, therefore, apparent that all the vessels contained the relics of Buddha in one form or the other.

The primary concern and interest to the scholars should, now, be the people who donated the relics contained in the five vessels. These five communities or individuals have been very clearly visualised in the interpretation presented by A. Barth. They are (1) Sakyas, (2) brothers of Sukiti (or Sukiti and his brothers), (3) their sisters (i.e. sisters of Sukiti), (4) their sons (i.e. the sons of the sisters of Sukiti) and (5) their wives (i.e. wives of the sons of the sisters of Sukiti).

However, the author is rather inclined to construe the text a little

differently than that by Barth. The depositors seem to be the (1) Sakyas, (2) the brothers of sukiti (of good deeds or of lofty fame i.e. an appellation of Buddha and not Sukiti and his brothers, second alternative suggested by Barth), (3) of his sisters (Sukiti's, rather Buddha's), (4) their sons as also, (5) their wives (of the sons of the sisters of Buddha). This translation leads to a new conclusion that the blood-relations of Buddha could also collect some portion of the mortal remains of Buddha, besides the Sakyas, and all of them being members of the Sakya community enshrined their portions along with the Sakya people in general.

In the light of the latest discoveries at Piprahwa coupled with the caskets found by Peppé and the author; the arguments of Fleet, that the caskets contained the relics of the Sakyas, massacred by Vidudabha, have hardly any ground to stand upon. The earlier interpretation presented by him is, therefore, much more valid.

VII. INTERLUDE

The announcement of the momentous discoveries at the press conference was followed by a complete lull. It was rather very unfortunate that the work of such a great merit did not receive the recognition deserved by it and I was transferred from Patna to Nagpur as the head of Excavations Branch in the month of June 1973. The orders of transfer came as a great shock to me, but as a loyal government servant I had to carry out the orders. Various Buddhist institutions and well-known monks approached the higher authorities in the government to cancel or postpone the transfer orders in the interest of work, but all in vain. The transfer orders were justified with a simple explanation that I will be in a better position to complete the works from Nagpur as Superintending Archaeologist of Excavations Branch. The question of economic drain was completely ignored.

Nagpur was a hot bed of politics and headquarters of union activities. The atmosphere in the country has developed in such a manner that unionism lays emphasis only on the demands without any relationship whatsoever with the duties. Demands are always claimed as a matter of right, whether justified or unjustified, never followed by a call for sincerity in work. All work and no play makes the jack a dull boy is a well-known precept, but in this country the reverse i.e. all play and no work makes the jack a dull boy can be considered as much more appropriate. I had, therefore, to encounter a very uncongenial atmosphere at Nagpur. In such a situation it was an uphill task to resume the work of great importance at Piprahwa. On my persistent request, however, Lal Chand Singh, Techni-

cal Assistant was transferred from Patna to the Excavations Branch, Nagpur. He was always a very hard and devoted worker, on whom I could depend for all works connected with excavation.

The excavation work was resumed in the month of December 1973 and it continued till the end of May 1974. The most spectacular discovery of the season was an inscribed lid of a pot carrying the legend '*Om, Devaputra Vihare, Kapilavastu, Bhikkhu Sanghas*'. A few more sealings with the legend Kapilavastu were also found. During the course of excavation in 1973-74 more monasteries and structures at Piprahwa were exposed. Of all, the most important was the monastery on western side, which yielded more than twenty terracotta sealings of a different kind. The sealings were so defaced and fragile that it was not possible to read the legend. They must be carrying some important information.

Though it was not at all difficult to flash the discoveries by contacting the correspondents of various newspapers, I always restrained myself from doing so in keeping with the conduct of a government servant. It was the duty of the higher authorities to keep the public informed about the epoch-making discoveries, but they appeared to be complacent in the matter. The only reason which might have restrained them in making the announcements publicly appeared to be the delicate relationship between the two neighbouring countries, India and Nepal. There was no harm, however, in placing the bare facts before the public. During the budget session of Parliament in April, 1974, one of the members wanted to know whether there were proofs based on archaeological excavations that Kapilavastu was situated in Basti district. In reply to the question by Mr. Nageshwar Dwivedi, the Deputy Minister for Education and Social Welfare, Mr. D.P. Yadav disclosed in the Lok Sabha that the discovery of a large number of sealings from a monastery at Piprahwa in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh bearing the legend '*Om, Devaputra Vihare, Kapilavastu, Bhikshu Sanghasya*' in Brahmi characters of the first and second century A.D. points to the possibility of identifying ancient Kapilavastu with Piprahwa.

In such hours of complacency I received an invitation from the Director of Indian Museum, Calcutta, to deliver a lecture on the latest discoveries, which was regarded as a great landmark in the annals of history. I readily accepted the invitation and instead of seeking permission

of the higher authorities, I applied for leave and proceeded to Calcutta in the month of October. Though the number of audience was not very large in the auditorium, those who attended constituted to be the distinguished scholars of Calcutta. The scholars acclaimed the discovery with loud applause. A number of press correspondents also gave a patient hearing to the lecture and a good publicity was given to it in the papers by UNI. The Indian Express of New Delhi printed the news on October 9, 1974 under the heading 'Piprahwa in Basti is site of Kapilavastu'. The contents of the news were as follows:

"The old controversy over the location of the legendary Kapilavastu, birthplace of the Buddha, has ended following the discovery of the lid of a pot carrying inscriptional evidence at Piprahwa in Basti district of U.P., according to a noted archaeologist, Mr. K.M. Srivastava of the Archaeological Survey of India.

"Mr. Srivastava, Superintending Archaeologist attached to Nagpur division, who conducted the excavation at Piprahwa, said the sealings and lid of the pot had established "beyond doubt that Piprahwa is the ancient site of Kapilavastu .

"He was addressing a seminar on the "locale of ancient Kapilavastu" organised by the Indian Museum here during the week end.

"He said the lid of a pot that was excavated from the site this year carried a similar legend "*Devaputra, Vihare, Kapilavastu, Bhikshu Sanghas*" as was discovered from the same place in 1973.

"Earlier, the scholars during their hundred years of search to locate Kapilavastu held divergent views in the absence of inscriptional evidence.

"Mr. Srivastava said the excavation in the eastern monastery at Piprahwa yielded more than 30 terracotta sealings with inscriptional evidence in the Brahmi script of the first-second century A.D. The sealings had been found at different spots in the monastery.

"He started the excavation in 1971 to identify Piprahwa as Kapilavastu, and continued till September this year. While he observed a burnt brick 'stupa' and two burnt brick chambers at a depth of about six metres in 1972, he found inscriptional evidence in 1973.

"He said two soapstone caskets and three dishes had also been

found inside the brick chambers. The casket contained charred bone relics which could be dated to fourth-fifth century B.C.

"Among other antiquities found from the site were Kushan and Ayodhya coins; bowls; antimony rods and a bowl in copper; polished stone weight and door hinges and sockets of iron".

The news appeared in almost all papers in India under different headings. In Nagpur Times it was published under the heading 'Controversy Over Location of Kapilavastu Ends' in the issue of 9th October 1974.

The finding of the relics of Lord Buddha followed by the terracotta sealings with the legend Kapilavastu, which answered the long-standing challenge of the identification of the place, was an epoch-making discovery, but the same did not receive due publicity. The highest authorities of the Archaeological Survey of India, instead of coming out with open statements on the fact, always preferred to give evasive replies to pointed question on the identification of Kapilavastu. The attitude was bound to have its bearing on the reply given by the Deputy Minister, D.P. Yadav in the Parliament.

In place of being assertive in the reply, he simply said that the discovery of large number of sealings from a monastery at Piprahwa in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh bearing the legend "*Om, Devaputra Vihare, Kapilavastu, Bhikshu Sanghasya*" in Brahmi characters of the first and second century A.D. points to the possibility of identifying ancient Kapilavastu with Piprahwa.

It appeared rather very strange that my parent department, Archaeological Survey of India, made all attempts to ignore the epoch-making discovery as a casual and routine work in the face of the fact that other important institutions and universities invited me for special lecture on the meritorious work done by me. The question of political relations with Nepal might have deterred them to give categorical statements on the identification of Kapilavastu, but making all efforts to keep the facts behind the curtain can never receive justification at the hands of honest scholars. Had there been no opportunity for lectures in other institutions, the epoch-making discovery would have remained clothed in darkness. I feel very much indebted to UNI, which gave wide publicity to the discovery in the columns of all important newspapers in India. Before any other

institution it should have been considered to be a great privilege by the Archaeological Survey of India itself to organise special lectures and take all steps to bring the discovery to the notice of the scholars all over the world. In view of the silence of the great institution, the scholars did not take a serious note of the great discovery.

The officials in command of the Archaeological Survey of India did not even care to encourage me on my work. On the other hand, they received pleasure in creating every kind of hurdle in the smooth progress of work. With this end in view they supported the Association on every step against me without any justification whatsoever. With the pampering of the highest officials at New Delhi, the office bearers of the Association found it very convenient to raise storm on every issue. The office bearers of the Association went to the extent of bringing the allegation of earning money by illegal means. There was hardly any day in the office when I did not receive a sealed cover from the highest officials at New Delhi, manipulating all types of unwarranted and malicious allegations against me. I had to waste not only precious hours, but days together, in preparing reply of the unfounded allegations. It is simply an irony of fate that no action was taken against the office bearers, who took pleasure in bringing out baseless allegations. With the office bearers the authorities at the top also felt delighted in the allegations, though they were not in a position to establish a single case against me. If all the allegations the letters contained in the sealed covers and my replies in defence are sent to press for publication, at least two volumes can be easily brought out.

As I have already pointed out, the authorities always came out with one excuse or the other to ignore the discovery of the relics and the sealings. When the important newspapers all over India gave wide publicity to the great event, they did not hesitate in commenting that the identification of Kapilavastu could not be considered as established, so long the remains of the main town are not brought to light. They never cared to visit the site and encourage by guiding me to the place where the location of the main town could be expected.

God is always great and if His hand of protection would not have been there, the persons in authority would always crush those, who do not toe their line. With me the hands of protection of my great spiritual Master, who was the messenger of God in physical form were always over my

head. I always received peace in perturbed hours, when I recollected his forceful words that worldly beings on earth have no power to victimize a man whose hands have been accepted by the Almighty. In addition to peace, the words were a source of great invigoration to me in going ahead with my work amidst all difficulties and problems created by the Association and the authorities at the helm of affairs. I was confident enough in bringing to light the remains of the town of ancient Kapilavastu on account of the results of a trial trench dug by me at the adjoining mound falling in the jurisdiction of village Ganwaria in the third season of excavation at Piprahwa. The small trench had yielded very rich antiquities, which corroborated the existence of a well-established habitation.

VIII. THE TOWN OF KAPILAVASTU

As a general practice *stupa* and connected monasteries were not clubbed together with the main township. They were always located a little away from the main habitation area, because worship, the purpose for which *stupas* were constructed, needed a calm and quiet atmosphere, free from the hustle and bustle of a crowded city-life. Kapilavastu was no exception to it. However, once the *stupa* consecrating the relics of Buddha was established on the basis of the inscribed relic casket followed by the terracotta sealings with the legend Kapilavastu from the eastern monastery at Piprahwa, it was not difficult to strike the remains of the main township. After a limited exploration in the vicinity, excavation was undertaken at an adjoining mound in the village jurisdiction of Ganwaria, a kilometre south-west of the ancient site of Piprahwa. Indications regarding the remains of the township were available in the trial trench sunk on the south-western fringe of the mound in 1972, the year in which fresh relic caskets came to light in the *stupa* at Piprahwa. The trial trench yielded rich antiquities in contrast to negligible number from the ancient site of Piprahwa. Antiquities in a large number could be expected only from a habitation area and not from Piprahwa, which was simply a monastic establishment. After all, monks were not expected to possess wealth in any form or shape.

The habitation area at Ganwaria was extensive enough. It was spread in 300 metres from north to south and 270 metres from east to west. The maximum occupational debris at the mound was seven metres. Though the extent of the ancient site was much more, a large chunk of it was converted into cultivable land. The site was marked by two conspi-

cuous mounds, the larger one on the western side and the smaller one on the eastern. Just like Piprahwa both the mounds were tapped in the past in search of wealth. They were considered to be *stupa* and hence the central portion was excavated leaving behind a depression. The digging appears to have been abandoned when the central area was found to be bereft of burnt bricks.

No doubt relic caskets, terracotta sealings and lid of a pot with the legend Kapilavastu had been of great help in locating the whereabouts of the place, the picture of the entire complex would have remained incomplete without uncovering the remains of the main township. The occupation at Piprahwa started only after the construction of the *stupa* in which the corporeal relics of Buddha were enshrined immediately after his cremation at Kusinara. The monasteries at Piprahwa followed the construction of the *stupa*. The town of Kapilavastu, however, had a much earlier beginning. Hence, to present a complete picture of the township of Kapilavastu, it was essential to expose the remains of an earlier period. Large scale excavations were, therefore, started at Ganwaria in 1974-75.

During the course of excavation at Ganwaria burnt-brick structures spread over a very large area were brought to light. The burnt-brick structural activity was a testimony to the identification of the site with the ancient town of Kapilavastu. The earliest inhabitants at Ganwaria, however, lived in houses made of mud walls with roofs supported on wooden posts. A part of a wooden post was found in position.

During the course of excavation in 1975 two massive burnt-brick structural complexes with impressive projected entrance to the east were exposed. Of the two, the larger one, on the western fringe of the mound, was about thirty metres square. It had twenty-five rooms with a gallery at each of the four corners. In the last phase of construction the number of rooms was raised to twenty-six with the help of a partition wall. The gallery at the corners was in alignment with the cardinal directions. In all there were five structural phases in the complex. The two rooms on either side immediately behind the entrance were most spacious. Generally the flooring was made of brick concrete mixed with lime, though in phase three pieces of burnt-brick were also used for the purpose. A ring-well having a diameter of 85 cms, was observed in the gallery on the north-western corner. With an open courtyard, about twenty-five metres square

in the centre, the rooms and galleries were constructed all around it. The thickness of the outer wall was more than two metres, whereas that of the inner one 1.70 metres in the last phase. The cross walls were more than a metre thick.

The larger structural complex embodied certain extraordinary features. Complete bricks were used only in the facing of the walls and the core was filled-up with brickbats. The bricks used in the facing, in the last two phases of construction, were rubbed in the pre-firing stage to present a beautiful appearance after firing, in addition to providing more strength to the structure.

Two projecting bastion-like structures were constructed towards the eastern side in the centre to give a majestic appearance to the entrance. As an additional attraction, three corners in each bastion were provided at the western end. In order to restrict the entry at a later stage and also to prevent the inside view, two walls, facing each other and projecting from the bastions, were raised at the easternmost end of the entrance. In front of the two walls there was a pavement made of brickbats with complete bricks used in the facing. The pavement served the purpose of an approach footpath to the massive complex. The width of the opening of the second entrance, provided with the help of two curtain walls, however, continued to be the same i.e. 2.35 metres.

In the year 1976 excavations were resumed at Ganwaria to determine the planning of the ancient town of Kapilavastu. Extensive structural remains, corroborating once again the identification of ancient Kapilavastu, were brought to light during the course of excavation. Besides exposing further the architectural members of the two massive burnt-brick structural complexes excavated in the preceding year, numerous structures, both secular and ecclesiastical, spread over a wide area, were also exposed.

Digging deeper into the rooms of the larger structural complex, it was observed that the earliest inhabitants of the site lived in houses of mud wall, the ceilings of which were supported on wooden posts. Remains of a wooden post were found in position. The mud walls and the occupation of the earliest people were subjected to regular inundation. In order to withstand the constant problem, the inhabitants constructed mud platforms and built their structures above them. The earliest occupational

levels were very much disturbed on account of various reasons, on the top of which was the regular inundation. The remains of the mud wall could be observed only at a few places. They were so badly damaged that the exact plan of the structures could not be determined. In one case the mud wall happened to be circular.

Soakage jars, contemporaneous with the ring-well discovered in the earlier year and attributable to the first phase of the burnt-brick structures, were a new feature. The central courtyard left unexcavated in the earlier year was partially dug upto the levels of the last floor made of brick-jelly. A covered drain of burnt-bricks, with its outlet near the south-western corner of the structural complex was noticed in the courtyard immediately below the floor. The five structural phases of burnt-brick in this complex were further confirmed during the season. The last phase was sub-divided into VA and VB. Though the planning as a whole was more or less similar, the alignment of the first three phases of the burnt-brick structure varied from one another. As revealed by squarish holes on either end of the entrance on the east, wooden frames appear to have been used to slam the doors.

Further excavation in the year 1977 brought to light remains of a verandah all around the central courtyard. The verandah, which must have been a covered one, was provided with the help of a thick wall. In the central courtyard a few rooms also appeared. Rooms in the central courtyard were an unusual feature.

But for a few additional features the smaller structural complex, about thirty metres to the north-east of the larger complex, appeared in the beginning to be similar to the larger one on the whole. It was about twenty-six metres square. A small room in the north-eastern corner appeared to have been used as lavatory or bathroom. In order to maintain privacy, the access to the room was provided through another small room opening in the central courtyard. Though the number of rooms in the smaller complex was less, the entrance was much wider, measuring 3.15 metres. In the earlier stages the entrance was towards the east. Later on, it was sealed with the help of a curtain wall and a narrow entrance, 1.20 meters wide, provided towards the northern side. Unlike the larger complex, the corner rooms on the south-east and north-west of this complex were the biggest. They were square in shape. Another distinguishing

feature of the smaller complex was that the planning was changed very frequently. The changes were so frequent that there was hardly any similarity in the lay out of different phases. Like the larger complex, five structural phases were encountered in this complex as well. The central courtyard of the complex was paved with bricks in a beautiful manner. On the north-eastern corner of the brick-paved courtyard a well was observed. Similar to the larger complex, a covered burnt-brick drain was constructed in the south-western corner of the courtyard to discharge the extra and refuse water. The outlet of the drain was in the western wing of the complex near the south-western corner. There was a verandah between the central courtyard and rooms all around. One of the rooms in the western wing of the complex was converted into a shrine in the last phase of construction with the help of moulded bricks. The shrine yielded a unique beautiful seated figure of Buddha in terracotta.

Amongst other secular structures a set of rooms of a house complex made of burnt-bricks was located close to the massive outer-wall of the larger structural complex near the south-eastern end of the entrance. It revealed two structural phases belonging to Phases III and IV of the larger complex. A beautiful disc in fine-grained bluish sandstone found there belonged to Phase III. It has a diameter of 14.5 cms and is carved with animal figures of elephant, lion and bull interspersed by floral and *chakra* designs, like those observed on the abacus of Asokan pillars.

Located farther in a south-easterly direction was a block of a large structure comprising several rooms, besides verandahs and two courtyards in the centre. Like the larger and smaller structural complexes, this too had its entrance towards the east. Initially it was squarish on plan, but the extension at a later stage in southern direction turned it into a rectangle. Two main entrances, one each of the earlier and later stages of its construction, were provided through a flight of steps. A small side door was also provided in its southern arm. Inside the complex and all around the courtyard, there were rows of rooms interspersed by narrow verandahs. The floor of the rooms, verandahs and courtyards were all well paved with regular courses of complete burnt bricks and/or brickbats. A long drain originating from the courtyard of the structure of the earlier stage travelled through the courtyard of the structure of the later stage and emitted out on the southern side. Time-lag between the two stages of

construction appeared to be very little. Considered in the light of its large size, elaborate drainage and arrangement of rooms, it was presumed that the structure was a school, which corresponded very well with the statement recorded by the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang.

Situated towards north of the larger structural complex, remains of a house representing another secular group of buildings were encountered. Several walls of successive structural phases were observed in a large area. It was represented by rickety houses of small brickbats. A huge earthen jar, a well and a cistern-like structure were some of the important remains. Of them, the last deserved a special mention for its constructional conception. Rectangular on plan, its inner sides were made tapering by laying the bricks in an off-set fashion. The bottom was brick-paved. It was three metres deep. While it was difficult to discern its purpose precisely, ritualistic affiliation, however, appeared quite likely. For the Buddhists it was customary, once in a year on a particular day, to offer rice in a cistern-like structure, after taking bath, to perpetuate the memory of the pious lady Sujata's offering of rice-pudding to Lord Buddha.

Close to the northern side of the smaller structural complex, there was yet another secular group of structures represented by rooms of different houses in a line. As evidenced by several phases, houses in this part of the mound were raised in quick succession for a fairly long time. The rooms running in a south-east north-west alignment were squarish on plan. In the last stage of structural activity they were clustered in a clumsy manner. Like the larger structural complex, pit activity was marked in this area also in the earlier stages. Terracotta figurines assignable to Sunga and Kushan art were collected from this area in a large number.

The excavations in the area falling between the larger and smaller structural complex revealed in the beginning that the earliest occupation represented by houses of mud wall was confined to the western part of the mound and did not extend to this area. As a safeguard against the recurring calamity of inundation, the inhabitants raised the ground level by piling up hard yellow compact clay, dug up from the nearby natural soil. It was so deceptive that it was taken to be natural soil while excavation was in progress in the rooms of the larger structural complex in the beginning. The clue to earlier occupation came from a number of pits observed in it. Being very close and sandwiched between the larger and smaller complex,

the structural activity in this area was not brisk and did not continue in all the five phases. It was restricted to phases three and four only. The structure of the third phase was a house, which had only three rooms. In the fourth phase the number of rooms was raised to four. A miniature well and a small circular platform-like structure were the other structures of the fourth phase.

Though the structural activity in the smaller structural complex was brisk in all the five phases, the structures on the northern and southern sides close by were restricted to phases three and four only. They were not so well planned and elaborate. The walls of the structures on the northern side were badly eroded. With the traces of the walls and brick-paved flooring, three rooms of a house could be reconstructed. The size of the rooms was bigger. The house had its extension below the smaller complex. A rectangular cistern 2.35 metres deep on the south-western end of the house was remarkable for its construction. On the north-western end of the house a beautiful deep well was brought to light. The last course of the bricks used in the construction of the well could not be touched, because of watertable, though as many as sixty-three courses were exposed. All around the well there was a brick-paved platform to facilitate drawing of water and keep away slush.

On the north-eastern corner of the smaller structural complex, there were two other houses built in phases three and four. In each case there was a room and a verandah. The rest of the house portion of both was covered up by the structures of later phase in the smaller complex.

Amongst the ecclesiastical group of structures, mention may be made of four shrines. Of these three are quite elaborate, whereas the fourth one is comparatively small. But for the last, all the three shrines were built near the eastern and southern end of the smaller structural complex.

The shrine towards the east was squarish on plan with the entrance on the west. The sanctum in the centre was surrounded on all sides by two enclosure walls interspersed by inner and outer *pradakshinapath*. The outer enclosure wall was built during the last stage of its life. The approach to the shrine was from the west through a flight of brick-paved steps.

Of all the four, the second shrine located towards the south of the smaller structural complex was the most magnificent. Initially, it was

smaller in dimension and squarish on plan provided with a paved pathway and enclosure wall. Subsequently, its sanctum was given an octagonal shape, but the enclosure wall, added later on, continued to be squarish on plan. The *pradakshinapath* of both the stages was brick-paved. The entire shrine exhibited three structural phases. The importance of the shrine was emphasised by a large number of Lord Buddha's head in terracotta recovered from it. The approach as in other cases was from the west. The shrine belonged to phases VA and VB.

The third shrine, located towards the south-east of the smaller structural complex and to the south of the first shrine, was also built in two phases and was squarish on plan. In the earlier structural phase, like the other two shrines, its entrance was towards the west which, however, was shifted to the south during the subsequent structural phase. Unlike the other two, it had no sanctum and instead a small *stupa* appeared to have been erected over a huge platform of burnt-bricks. The *stupa* was not in the centre of the platform, but was raised nearer to the northern arm. However, it was in the centre of east-west orientation. A few walls of burnt-brick forming part of house complexes below the shrine indicated that religious structures were constructed over the civic structures.

Found close to the cistern-like structure and north of the larger structural complex, the fourth shrine was represented by a squarish sanctum with its entrance towards the east. A drain runs all along its four arms. The shrine had two structural phases viz. VA and VB.

In order to verify the observation of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang that civic structures were superimposed by religious structures, a small area on the north-western corner of shrine number 2 was undertaken for digging by removing an insignificant portion of the shrine. As already expected, rooms of a house complex, meant for common man, were struck below. The structural activity in this area also started in the first phase. A single room of the first phase came to view in the limited area of excavation, though it had its extension towards the southern side. The house was made much more elaborate in the second and third phases. Of the second phase, another room towards the northern side was exposed. In the third phase, addition of yet another room was noticed on the eastern side. The addition of the last room was apparent from the abrupt end of the walls of the first two phases. The cross walls of the room of the

third phase had eroded badly, leaving behind only traces.

The entire occupational deposit at Ganwaria could be divided into four periods. Period I datable between c.800 and 600 B.C. was characterised by black polished ware; fine grey ware; red ware vases and dishes with reddish rim, blackish bottom and greyish interior, associated with the Painted Grey Ware in western parts of Northern India; red ware bowls and dishes with a mirror-like polish occasionally painted in black dots and circles. A number of fragments painted in black over a greyish surface were quite interesting. The painted fragments often carried thumb impression in the same pigment on the interior.

Period II was characterized by the appearance of the Northern Black Polished Ware; a red ware painted in black horizontal bands and other associated wares. A variety of shades in addition to painted fragments were also observed in the Northern Black Polished Ware. A date between 600 and 200 B.C. was ascribed to it.

Period III belonged to Sunga times with its beginning in the second century B.C. and end by the beginning of the Christian era.

Period IV was characteristically Kushan starting in the beginning of the Christian era and ending in the third century A.D.

The excavation at Ganwaria yielded, besides other antiquities, a very rich variety of terracottas. A female bust with the left arm raised and holding a mirror in her right hand has been tastefully decorated with the help of lines and strokes in low relief. Female plaques are very impressive. A child sucking the breast and a male bust with a typical snake-hood like head-dress on the top of the head and fan-type round the ears are also interesting.

A pair of heavy anklets (?) in copper alloy; copper and silver coins; terracotta stamps, skin rubbers, whistles, dabbers, beads, bangles, wheel, decorated ornaments and gamesmen; beads of glass, ivory and semi-precious stones; stone-weights; chisels, sickles, arrow and dagger-heads, knives and a razor in iron; copper bowls; glass bangles; soapstone vessel; a highly polished legged quern with a pestle in stone; copper antimony rods; silver ear-stud and bone points of various shapes in large number were some of the other important antiquities.

Two hoards of coin, each found in a small pot in the area between

the larger and smaller structural complex, constituted to be another valuable find. One of them contained sixty-four silver punch-marked coins, whereas the other thirty-seven Kushan coins. Imitation of a conch-shell in terracotta is also very fascinating.

As it has already been pointed out, image worship had no place in the earliest stages of Buddhism. The spiritual urge of the people, however, could not be satisfied for long simply by the worship of the *stupas* and the symbols of Buddha. In response to their instincts during the reign of the Kushan emperor, Kanishka, sometimes in the first century A.D., Buddha was deified and the people took delight in worshipping the images of the Lord. As a mark of devotion the *stupa* at Piprahwa was, therefore, reconstructed during the reign of Kanishka and the square base embellished with niches at regular intervals to house the images of Buddha.

Once the representation of Buddha in person was adopted by the religion, it gained a popular appeal and images of the Lord recalling significant events of his life were produced in large numbers in stone, terracotta and other materials that were readily available.

A seated figure of Buddha in terracotta from Kapilavastu is a remarkable and unique piece of art, not only on account of the great skill in workmanship but also because of the posture. With a halo round the head, Buddha is shown sitting in a cross-legged position on a double lotus throne. The fingers of his left hand are clenched in the fingers of his right hand. Folds of the garment that fall from the left shoulder and covers the lower part of the body completely have been prominently depicted. The right shoulder and arm have been left bare. Long pierced eyes, thick lips and a broad forehead, being the *lakshanas* (signs) of a *mahapurusha* (great man), have been displayed with dexterity. A beaded crown covers the head. The drooping eyes show that he is completely absorbed in deep meditation. An image of Buddha in such a *mudra* (attitude) is novel to the religion of Buddhism and so far no attempt has been made to explain the idea behind it. This masterly terracotta was found in one of the rooms of the smaller structural complex, just opposite the entrance, which was converted into a shrine. It has been dated to second-third century A.D.

While the shrines at Kapilavastu yielded a number of other Buddha figures, two heads deserve special attention. Both exhibit the mood of contemplation, the expression of one being more masculine than the

other Alayman can easily observe in the more masculine head the feelings of great strength and vigour which can be gained from spiritual power. Half-closed eyes indicate absolute absorption in meditation. The thick and slightly parted lips clearly express the enjoyment of eternal bliss. The head-dress is of the popular beaded variety displaying a masterly sense of proportion. The head has been assigned a date of second-third century A.D. A little more delicate, the other head of the same date, is of cruder workmanship; the beaded head-dress, half-closed eyes, as also the nose and the lips have been executed in a rather careless manner.

Buddhism no doubt had a stronghold on Kapilavastu, the followers were not fanatic and an atmosphere of religious toleration prevailed. This fact is revealed by a terracotta head with three eyes representing the sect of Saivism. It is adorned with heavy *kundalas* (ear-rings) and a necklace of large beads. The wide open eyes burst out of their lids in a terrifying way, the expression typical of the Hindu deity Siva, the Lord of destruction. The small open mouth is an additional contribution to the fearsome expression, while the head-dress has been ornamented in a peculiar leaf-like design. It has been dated to second-third century A.D.

The inhabitants of Kapilavastu in the early centuries of the Christian era were not preoccupied with religious practices alone. They took part in entertainments and recreations too, as revealed by a number of dancing figures in terracotta. Wearing a similar type of garment, male and female alternating with each other, have been shown in finger-rolled terracotta clay, dancing freely hand in hand. In this case, they are ornamented with necklaces and hair styles that have been indented with a simple tool. These figures belong to the beginning of the Christian era.

Since Kapilavastu was a stronghold of the Kushānas, a foreign tribe, the terracottas could not escape foreign influence. One of the most characteristic pieces embodying an alien concept is a head wearing a covering which extends down both sides. The eyes and mouth of this head are wide open and the nose is long and pointed. The features are very clearly those of a man, but the workmanship, when compared with terracottas from the site in general, is of a poorer standard. It can be dated to the first century A.D.

When Prince Siddhartha (as Buddha was known before he gained Enlightenment) renounced all the pleasures of life, he left the palace quietly in the dead of night on his favourite horse Kanthaka. Symbolising the event of the Great Departure, a terracotta horse was found at the main entrance of the larger structural complex. The horse is standing bridled and saddled, ready to steal the march of the Great Departure. The terracotta has been dated to third century A.D.

The artisans of Kapilavastu were adept not only in working in clay, but also in hard materials such as stone. A decorated sandstone disc speaks of the perfect sense of proportion possessed by them in presenting the characteristic details of various types of animals within a limited space. Imitating to some extent the design on the abacus of Asokan pillars, the stone disc is carved around a blank central space. The carved areas have been executed in two main concentric rings separated from each other and bordered by narrow bands in relief. An indented pattern marks the perimeter of the central circular space. The adjoining ring carries a similar indented pattern but executed in a scroll-like fashion. The outer ring is wider and more intricately carved with four animals, of which only three are now intact. These animals are an elephant, a lion, and a bull. The fourth, now damaged, might have been a horse, though the hind part of the animal, and particularly the raised tail, appear somewhat similar to that of the lion. The characteristic details of the animals have been delineated with great care to make them appear life-like. The panels with the animals are bordered and interspersed by a number of floral and scroll-like designs. Between the damaged animal and the bull the wheel of law, a symbol of Buddhism, has been depicted. Like the innermost circular space, the outer ring of the stone disc is bordered at the edge with an indented pattern.

The sense of proportion which the artist possessed, to be able to produce such a delicately balanced piece, is outstanding for its time. Only religious zeal and devotion could have given him the confidence necessary to produce such a work of art, as early as the 1st century A.D.

Excavation was also undertaken on a mound known as Salargarh, located towards the east of Piprahwa, at a distance of about 200 metres.

The excavation brought to light a monastery of Kushan period. Rectangular on plan, the monastery comprised several rooms in a row and also one behind the other. The lay-out of this monastery was entirely different from those at Piprahwa. There was no central courtyard and in a number of cases the rooms were interconnected. The approach to the monastery was from the north through a flight of steps. But for copper coins, the monastery did not yield any important antiquity.

Close to the north of the monastery, a small *stupa* was also exposed. Initially it was circular in plan, but later on the base was converted into a square at the time of reconstruction. Keeping in view the size of bricks, the earlier *stupa* appeared to be contemporaneous with the first phase of the *stupa* at Piprahwa.

IX. THE TURNING POINT

A revolutionary turning point in the history of the identification of Kapilavastu and the discovery of the relics of Lord Buddha emerged in January 1976 with the beginnings rooted in November-December 1975. During the closing months of 1975 I was preoccupied in giving finishing touches to the excavation conducted by me at Bakraur near Bodh Gaya, which gave indications to the place where the pious lady Sujata lived. Sujata had offered, as it is well-known, *payasa* (Sweetened milk-rice preparation) to Buddha just on the day preceding the night of His Enlightenment under the sacred *peepal* tree at Bodh Gaya. John Irwin of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, was desirous of seeing me in order to discuss on *stupas* and pillars, a subject in which he evinced great interest and presented before the scholars an altogether new theory. How far the grounds on which he raised the new theory were firm need not be discussed here. Besides studying various sites John Irwin made a programme for Bodh Gaya to meet me. It was rather unfortunate, both for him as well as for me, that I had left the site of Bakraur a day or two prior to the visit of John Irwin. I had moved to the site of Piprahwa to make preparations for further work, because I had no information that John Irwin was anxious to meet me at Bodh Gaya. Being disappointed he extended his programme to Piprahwa with the same end in view. The misfortune and disappointment were repeated at Piprahwa, because John Irwin reached there only after I had left the place.

John Irwin came back to New Delhi and placed before the then Director General, M.N. Deshpande the disappointments which he had

to encounter. Since he was very keen to meet me, he wanted to know from the Director General if there was any possibility of his meeting with me.

Deshpande obliged him by giving an assurance that I would be called at New Delhi itself. He contacted me on phone at Nagpur, my headquarters at that time, and requested me to reach New Delhi by the 21st January. The purpose was also explained to me. I readily agreed for exchanging my own views with John Irwin and reached New Delhi by the due date. John Irwin was to deliver a series of lectures on *stupas* and pillars at the India International Centre, New Delhi, which was to be inaugurated by Deshpande himself. Since the lecture was fixed for the evening I spent the whole day in the office of the Director General and at the close of the office accompanied Deshpande to his residence in his own car. On the way I gathered adequate courage to speak to the Director General simply to present my genuine grievances. I expressed, "Sir, three years have already elapsed and you have not given any categorical statement on the discovery of Kapilavastu". He did not lose any time in coming out with a reply that he never refuted it. Gathering further strength I told him that there was a wide gulf between refuting a fact and giving a categorical statement to confirm the same. Somehow or the other, he was kind enough to accept my point of argument and made it clear to me that the best way out was to deliver a lecture in the National Museum, where I could place the facts before the well-known scholars. The presence of the Director General in the lecture would have been a positive support to my identification and could be taken as a categorical statement.

After enjoying tea at the residence of the Director General, we reached India International Centre where John Irwin was to deliver the lecture. A good gathering of well-known scholars including B.B. Lal, the former Director General, was already present when we entered the Centre. It was a moment of great excitement and pleasure to me when Lal did not lose any time introducing me by declaring, 'Here is the great man who has discovered Kapilavastu'. I shall ever remain indebted to Lal for the statement which not only elated me but happened to be the root cause of my future fame. The statement of Lal carried great importance for the correspondents of various newspapers. They were after me for a press-

interview convenient on any date. With the conduct rules always in my mind I could never agree for the press-interview, unless and until the consent of the Director General was there. I, therefore, diverted their attention towards Deshpande who was the right man to allow them for the personal interview. Deshpande acceded to the request of the correspondent of The Times of India. The succeeding day in the forenoon was fixed for the purpose. The lecture of John Irwin started a few minutes after that and we all listened to it with great attention.

The next day I was waiting anxiously for the correspondent in the forenoon in the room of Deshpande. The journalist was preoccupied with other business on the day and as such could not turn up. There was no question of waiting for him again on the succeeding day. I, therefore, engaged myself in my own studies in the Library of the Photo Section of the Archaeological Survey of India. The correspondent appeared in the office of the Director General and sought an interview. Deshpande, after chatting a few words with him, directed the attendant to take him to me. He was brought by the attendant to the photo section. The attendant expressed to me that he was sent by the Director General. Once an attendant of the Director General brought a correspondent to me under the directions of the highest authority I was justified in treating it as a permission for press-interview.

The journalist collected all information from me, in addition to some photographs which were readily available with me. He gave a good coverage to the discovery and the news appeared on the front page of the 'Times of India', New Delhi, (City edition) of 24th January 1976 under a prominent heading 'Lost City of Kapilavastu Found'. Important extracts from the news are as follows:

"The lost city of Kapilavastu has been found. Recent excavations have not only conclusively identified this historic city but have also set at rest the 100-year old controversy over its location.

"It has now been established that Piprahwa, 25 kms from Naugarh railway station on the Gorakhpur-Gonda loop line of North-eastern Railway is Kapilavastu. It is also, however, 25 kms from Tilaurakot in Nepal which many scholars until now believed was Kapilavastu.

"Piprahwa is the place where the Buddha spent the first 29 years of his life. This is where he saw, as Prince Siddharta, the miseries of human

existence which provoked him to leave his family and Kingdom in quest of salvation.

"Amongst the most precious archaeological finds at Piprahwa are two beautiful soapstone caskets containing the charred bones of the Buddha. His kinsmen had then built a stupa over the caskets and three dishes containing ashes.

"Archaeologists in search of Kapilavastu have also found 40 terracotta seals and the lid of a pot bearing the inscription "Kapilavastu". One such seal in the Pali language (Brahmi script) was inscribed with the words; "Om devaputra vihare Kapilavastu bhikku Sanghas."

"This inscription proved to be the decisive evidence needed by the archaeologists to clinch the issue. Coming as it did, in addition to the discovery of the monastery, the stupa and the town site, it put the lid on the controversy once and for all.

"The identification of Kapilavastu marks a significant advance in the field of archaeology and religion. Now that the nucleus has been found, other sites connected with the Buddha may well be located. It gives scholars a focal point from which they can study the Buddha's movements from Kapilavastu to other regions.

"Mr. K.M. Srivastava, Superintending Archaeologist, Excavations Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India, who has been conducting excavation at Piprahwa for five years told this reporter in exclusive interview today that the inscription found by him was written during the reign of Kushan king Kanishk who used to call himself "devaputra" or the son of God."

"The inscription said that this monastery was built by Kanishk for the order of the monks at Kapilavastu.

"Having located the monastery and the stupa, Mr. Srivastava said, the next logical step was to find the ancient town. Large scale excavations exposed two massive brick structures.

"On the basis of the antiquities and the nature of the construction of those structures, there is no doubt that this was the residential complex of the chief of the Sakyas, king Shuddodhana, father of the Buddha", Mr. Srivastava said. "Excavations were now in progress to outline the plan of the town".

The concluding sentence of the news was, "What more proof is required that Piprahwa is indeed Kapilavastu? Mr. Srivastava said".

As suggested by Deshpande a lecture on the identification of Kapilavastu was arranged in the National Museum two days later in consultation with the authorities of the Museum. B.B. Lal was approached to preside and he readily gave his consent. While introducing me and the subject to the audience which included a few well-known scholars, Lal acclaimed my work to be of greatest merit. The words used by him in appreciation of the work were all in superlatives. He attached much more importance to the work on account of the fact that a successful attempt was made to correlate the ancient texts with the archaeological remains. The lecture was no doubt arranged at the request of the Director General, Deshpande, it was a matter of great surprise to observe that not a single officer of the Archaeological Survey of India was present in the auditorium to listen to my talk. The main reason behind the conspicuous absence of the officers of the Archaeological Survey of India could not be assessed. Deshpande reached the auditorium when the lecture was over and the audience had started dispersing. He explained to me his preoccupation with other works which were considered by him to be of much more importance.

The news of the identification of Kapilavastu worked like a flash all over the country. A continuous stream of requests started flowing to me for an article on the discovery. Correspondents of some of the important newspapers also approached me for the details. As a sequel the news was published in many more newspapers. An article was prepared for the Illustrated Weekly of India to be published on the eve of Buddha Purnima in May. Similarly important magazines in Hindi also incorporated my discovery in their Buddha Purnima issue. In his editorial note at the top of the article the editor of the Illustrated Weekly of India (dated May 16, 1976) commented, "For centuries, historians have been trying to locate the place where the Buddha lived before he renounced the world. The author, who is Superintending Archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India, reports on his findings which may set the controversy at rest. A special feature of Buddha Jayanti".

In appreciation of the great work as published in the Times of India, a large number of letters from scholars and distinguished personalities congratulating me on the historic achievement were received. The wide

publicity of the epoch-making discovery shattered the age-old belief that Tilaurakot in Nepal was ancient Kapilavastu. Quite natural as it was, the scholars in Nepal were greatly disturbed on the news, particularly because they always claimed that Buddha hailed from Nepal and it was that very country which gave birth to Buddhism. Questioning the identification of the relics and Kapilavastu on the basis of sealings, scholars from Nepal lost no time in publishing some damaging articles against me. They in fact launched a campaign of calumny against me and derived pleasure in using not only undesirable, but more than often unparliamentary language. The identification was made a victim of political boundaries, without any basis whatsoever, because the line of demarcation between India and Nepal had its birth in the British rule and did not exist during the time of Buddha and his father Suddhodana.

A limited number of excerpts given below will be sufficient to expose the unfounded prejudices of the scholars from Nepal, besides exhibiting the taste of the language in which they preferred to indulge.

"The attention of the Department of Archaeology of His Majesty's Government has been arrested by a news-story with the Caption "Lost City of Kapilavastu Found", that appeared in an Indian daily, the Times of India, of January 24, 1976. The theme of the news-story was the thesis of an Indian archaeologist that Piprahwa in India was the ancient city of Kapilavastu, and not Tilaurakot in Nepal, as has been hitherto maintained by all the archaeologists of world renown.

"It may be recalled that the said Indian archaeologist has been, these past few years, coming out with press interviews and feature articles which are so misleading and baseless in regard to Tilaurakot and so vague and self-contradictory in regard to Piprahwa. His predilection to inflate the archaeological finds in Piprahwa out of all proportion to the sober reality has been fully understood by all the scholars of archaeology. His pronouncements on Kapilavastu made on various dates and occasions lack in clarity of thought and consistency of presentation"¹

The scholars from Nepal never tried to study the remains and antiquities exposed at the main township of Kapilavastu. Complete igno-

1. Tilaurakot the ancient city of Kapilavastu, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee, (2520) Kathmandu Shree Gha; NEPAL, p. 1

rance of the facts and the type of language from which they derived pleasure will be revealed by the following excerpts:

"Writing a feature article in the *Dharmayug* of May 1973, he describes the excavation activities going on in Piprahwa. In this article there are short passages giving an account of the Sakyas and also of Tilaurakot and other places of Buddhistic importance, written in his slipshod style. This article bears a photograph with the caption: "A scene of a Vihara found in the excavations in Piprahwa". Coming down to January 24, 1976, he reprints this very photograph with the caption: "The ruins of the palace of Buddha's father, Suddhodana, in Piprahwa now identified as Kapilavastu". Why should he be in such a haste to call one archaeological object a Vihara on one occasion and a palace on another is a question that defies all understanding. Does it not bespeak of his great obsession to identify Kapilavastu, somehow or other, with Piprahwa rather than Tilaurakot? Is it not indeed a propaganda stunt of not very high order?

"Any attempt at establishing the identity of Kapilavastu with Piprahwa on the evidence of terracotta seals issued for various purposes during the period as late as that of the Kushanas or through the technique of giving the nomenclature of a palace complex to a structure of purely monastic nature should be characterised as rank propaganda.

"In the news-story under reference the Indian archaeologist has made a tendentious representation of the archaeological findings at Tilaurakot.

"The Indian archaeologist seems to be totally ignorant of the excavations conducted during the last one decade in Tilaurakot and its vicinity. It should be ridiculous for such an ignominious to cherish the dream of exploring the lost city of Kapilavastu or of giving a verdict on Tilaurakot and Piprahwa. Such cheap propaganda stunt should be a breach of the norms of archaeological discipline.

"Present excavation works being launched there in such earnestness have, reportedly yielded no better results. Yet the Indian archaeologist would not hesitate to come out once in every while with slogan; LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU FOUND.

"On the basis of the above-mentioned two statements a reader

can distinctly find out the inconsistency in the opinion of the same person for the same structure. It is clear that the structure found by Mr. Srivastava is like a monastery and secondly, it belongs to the second-third century A.D. About the same building Mr. Srivastava later on, stated that it was a palace complex of king Suddhodana. So a reader can simply comment that Mr. Srivastava does not have any consistency in his opinion."

One of the scholars came out with some undersirable remarks without caring to study the various levels, places, and periods which yielded the antiquities. He commented, "Is it not interesting to note that Mr. Srivastava discovered terracotta Buddha heads along with his father's palace possibly to show father's desire to make an image of his son?"²

He further said, "Thus the arguments of Mr. Srivastava are not fair and satisfactory. On one hand his different statements are inconsistent with one another and on the other hand he wanted to amuse the world by imaginary discoveries, and arguments, which no one can believe to be true".³

The scholars of Nepal were not contented with the damaging remarks they showered on me, but went to the extent of requesting their Government to lodge a protest against me with the Government of India. Ignoring completely the facts of the findings at Piprahwa, His Majesty's Government acceded to their request and sent a strong letter to the Government of India questioning the authenticity of my statement. Instead of stopping the roll of the ball in the Ministry of Education itself by furnishing a suitable reply, it was passed on to the Director General. Being the head of the Department it was obligatory on the part of the Director

1. Tilaurakot the ancient city of Kapilavastu, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee (2520) Kathmandu Shree Gha, NEPAL, p. 2 onwards
2. Tri Ratna Manandhar, Srivastava's "Where is Kapilavastu in nutshell, Voice of History (Journal of History Instruction Committee, Kirtipur Campus) with Kapilavastu Supplement, Vol. II Annual, 1976, Kirtipur, Nepal, p. 127
3. *Ibid.*

General to defend me by placing before the Government the hard facts. He, however, derived pleasure in throwing the ball on my head with a far greater force by calling an explanation from me. He asked me to explain how I gave press statements, because I was not authorised to do so. He further laid emphasis on the fact that I was creating an embarrassing situation for him by the press statements on Kapilavastu. It may be recalled in this context that the permission for giving press interview to the Times of India was given not by anybody else but the Director General, M.N. Deshpande, himself. Any news published by any other paper on the subject did not contain anything beyond the facts revealed in the Times of India of 24th January. Is it not an irony of fate that the Director General after according due permission for a press statement called me to explain my conduct on the same account?

It is a universally known fact that the excavations at Piprahwa and Ganwaria entailed enormous expenditure running into several lakhs spent in a number of seasons. The money spent was not advanced by any private individual out of his own earnings, but it was a public money. The public had therefore, every right to know the results of the excavation. Keeping the public in dark could never be justified. The right of the public was, however, ignored and the discovery was kept a secret for three years continuously. After three years when the public was made aware of the discovery with proper permission of the Director General, the author was taken to task. In such a situation I do not want to elucidate as to who failed in his bounden duty. In addition to the present generation, the posterity will be there to study the facts and deliver their well-thought-out judgement. On my own I swallowed the bitter pill after giving a suitable reply to the Director General on the above-mentioned lines.

As already pointed out, the scholars from Nepal raised many objections on the identification of Kapilavastu in an unparliamentary language. No time should have been lost in furnishing suitable replies to their objections, in addition to drawing particular attention to the abusive language used by them. I was always prepared to draft the replies for the Director General, but he wanted to restrain the privilege to himself. After having waited impatiently for the comments sent by the Director General, I received a simple letter from him after several months asking me to send

the reply direct. Such a step was resorted to, inspite of the fact that I had furnished parawise comments to the Director General. When the privilege of sending the reply was passed on to me, I considered it much more advisable to refute the allegations in a printed book with illustrations, particularly because the scholars from Nepal had also brought out their objections in print. While I was pondering over the publication of the book, Panchbhai of the Nagpur Buddhist Centre approached me for bringing out a good book on the identification of Kapilavastu. I did not know Panchbhai earlier. Lord Buddha as a blessing hastened him to meet me. I assured him for the publication and completed the work within a very limited time. Panchbhai took all pains to see that the illustrations were of the highest quality on account of my special request for the same.

The book was ultimately printed and circulated in the market under the title 'KAPILAVASTU'. I sent complimentary copy of the publication to the highest authorities in the Survey including the Director General, M.N. Deshpande. When the publication was received by him, I was told, he was furious on my legitimate action. Anyway the cat was out of the bag. The reward I received was the wrath of the Director General, which stood in the way of my future promotion and made me to suffer. On this occasion I only recollect the last words uttered by Christ, 'O, God, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing'.

X. RELICS FOR SRI LANKA

The publication of the news 'Lost City of Kapilavastu Found' had a deep impact on the Buddhists all around the world. With the news the ball, which was not allowed to move at all, started rolling. His Excellency Justin Siriwardene, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India, was very much attracted by the news, which led him to think on the publicity and development of the sacred place. The grace of God is always there on those who believe in pious works and act in accordance to that. A man with unflinching faith and devotion in Buddhism appeared before him on the 26th January, 1976. He was none else but Mr. Noeyal Peiris from Sri Lanka, Secretary General of International Centre of Asoka Culture, with whose vigorous efforts the relics of Buddha were ultimately carried to Sri Lanka for exposition and worship. After having discussed with the Director General, M.N. Deshpande, regarding permission to undertake excavations at Nal Sopara near Bombay, he went to see His Excellency, the High Commissioner for Sri Lanka. The High Commissioner happened to be an old friend of Mr. Noeyal Peiris, and was, therefore, delighted to meet him. Both Mr. Noeyal Peiris and a friend accompanying him accepted the invitation for lunch. The following words of Mr. Noeyal Peiris will recall the further developments. "After lunch on 26th January, 1976, Mr. Siriwardene showed me a paper cutting of the Times of India, New Delhi, dated 24th January, 1976. There were in big letters, the words, LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU FOUND. Mr. Siriwardene gave it to me and said, "Give some publicity to it as it is very important to us Buddhists in

Sri Lanka". I thanked him and took the paper cutting and seeing it, I said, "What? To give publicity? Not only publicity, I must go to this place and see it for myself before going back to Sri Lanka. I must see it and try to develop it so that all other Buddhists of the world may be able to pay their respects to the place where Prince Siddhartha spent 29 years, at Kapilavastu. It was in this place that he got the idea to go all out to see what could be done to stop suffering, disease, old age and death. It was from here that he left as a Prince, gave up all his wealth and comforts, wife and child, father and a Kingdom. He gave up all comforts and enjoyment and wanted to seek a way to happiness and save all mankind from suffering, and to help everyone to achieve eternal happiness.

"When I said, that I wanted to go and see this important place with my own eyes, and was getting prepared to start off, His Excellency asked me straightway, "How is your money position?" I promptly said, "Not so good, not so bad". When I was about to start he said, "Wait a little", and he went to his apartment and returned in a few minutes and put a hundred rupee note into my pocket. That was really wonderful, a gift from the Devas as it were, as I had only enough money to get back to Bombay to attend to my Sopara work.

"At the Ceylon Buddhist Pilgrims Rest where I was staying, I met a tourist from America who had helped some of our Buddhist youth coming back from Pakistan when they had lost their money. I showed him the paper cutting and told him that I was leaving to see this wonderful place—may be as the first Sri Lankan to go on a pilgrimage to that holy place, I said. After reading the paper cutting he said that he was also very anxious to accompany me, if I had no objection. I told him that I was very happy to take him along with me as I had plans to develop that place from a Buddhist pilgrimage point of view. I said that the moment I give publicity in the local and foreign papers there would be large crowds coming to pay their respects to such a holy place.

"I then went and met Mr. M.N. Deshpande, the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India along with Dr. Premtillaka to discuss the Sopara stupa excavations, and how we could do it as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka. He suggested that we allow them to excavate a site here, in Sri Lanka, and that they will allow us to do the same in India. I then told Mr. Deshpande that I was going to Kapilavastu and

obtained all the information as to how one could get to Kapilavastu. He gave me a plan and told me to go and let him also know what I feel about the place".¹

With the American friend, Mr. Alexander Rybalkin (22 Vanderanter Avenue, Princeton, N.J., USA) Mr. Noeyal Peiris reached Naugarh railway station after visiting Sravasti on the way in the evening of 31st January, 1976. Both of them met the Bhikkhu in charge of the Buddhist Temple of the Mahabodhi Society, which is close to the railway station and passed the night in the temple. Further account of the trip has been rendered much more interesting by the words used by Mr. Noeyal Peiris himself. "On the 1st of February, 1976, we left by the 7 A.M. bus from Naugarh to Birdpur, a distance of nine miles, and from there we took a Cycle-Rickshaw to Kapilavastu which is in India, and not in Nepal—a distance of another six miles. We met one of the Archaeological Department employees walking to Kapilavastu; we got him also into the Rickshaw as we were all going to the Piprahwa Camp site where all the officers and men were working. We could go only three miles by Rickshaw as the road was not yet built. We all had to get down from the Rickshaw and walk because the road was sandy. When I wanted to walk my American friend told me not to get down and walk because I had with me another Robe and the Relics casket. He made me sit in the Rickshaw and he pushed it along with the other 2 persons and we reached the Piprahwa Camp site, a distance of another 3 miles, shortly afterwards.

"Seeing the canvas tents I was overjoyed; there were about 300 men working and 15 officers of the Archaeological Survey of India. We all went to the site and met Mr. Lal Chand Singh, the Technical Assistant, who greeted us and was very happy to see us. He was also very happy to hear that I was a Buddhist from Sri Lanka and that my friend Mr. Alexander Rybalkin, was from the USA. He served us with tea and was very happy to take us round the ruins excavated so far, and explained all that they had excavated. We saw all the sites they had opened up. It was really a moving experience to see such a vast place being excavated. This was the Holy

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 20

Land where once Prince Siddhartha had lived for 29 years and left to find a way to save all humanity from Suffering, old age, disease and death”

“Mr. K.M. Srivastava, the Superintending Archaeologist, was not available since he had gone to his Head Office in Nagpur. We were taken round by Mr. Singh. We went down 24 feet to the Relic chamber, which they had excavated and where they found the Soapstone Casket with the charred bones of Lord Buddha, the one-eighth portion of the Corporeal Relics of the Buddha given to the relations of the Buddha, who were the Sakya people. I went down the ladder to the very place where the casket was unearthed by Mr. Srivastava. I placed the Sacred Robe that I had brought all the way from Sri Lanka, lighted 7 coconut oil lamps I had also brought with me, placed the small silver casket I had brought on the Robe I had brought to be offered at Buddhagaya, and started chanting Pirith, with my friend Alexander by my side.

“I could not finish chanting, when tears started pouring down my eyes. I could not even chant the Karaniya Metta Sutta halfway, I just could not chant. There was no sound. I was spell-bound as the Spiritual Vibrations were so very powerful in that place. I have no words to explain the feelings about that Holy Place as I have never visited such a place before. Not only did tears come to my eyes, but my whole body was vibrating with that Spiritual Force which developed in that place. At that moment it struck me, and I realised why Prince Siddhartha had given up his wife, child, kingdom, everything that was worldly. He wanted to find out a way to save mankind from suffering, old age, disease and death. He had felt the Spiritual Force which was guiding Him all along, though he lived in the palace, had all the comforts, pleasures, riches, princely garments, wife and child, the Kingdom of Kapilavastu and the Throne itself before Him. He fled from all that, to realise for Himself the experience of Suffering. He wanted to find out the One and Only way to live—not with all this luxury, comforts and a throne. That was not what he wanted. He was born to do a job of work—to save others from this cruel world, to show the way to Eternal Happiness, and to lead a life of sacrifice and service.”¹

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 21

Mr. Noeyal Peiris, no less than a pilgrim, reached Bombay after visiting Bodh Gaya on his way back to Sri Lanka. While in Bombay he wrote letters to various concerned Ministers both at the centre and the State requesting them to complete the construction of the road from Birdpur to Piprahwa. He impressed upon them that the discovery of the lost city of Kapilavastu will bring in a large influx of pilgrims and tourists from all parts of the world. They would come to pay their respects to the place, where Buddha spent the first 29 years of his life before renouncing the world to find a way out of suffering. In such circumstances the road was essential. Mr. Noeyal Peiris reached Madras on the 10th April. He had made all arrangements to leave for Sri Lanka the next day.

Now, again in the words of Mr. Noeyal Peiris, "On the 11th I saw in the 'Hindu News Paper' a news item that the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, was visiting New Delhi for a few days. I took a quick decision and left the same night by train to New Delhi and reached there on the 13th April, 1976; and telephoned our High Commissioner and told him that I had come back. He was so happy to meet me and wanted me to come and have some *Kiribath* (milk rice) as it was the Sinhale New Year Day. When I met him I told him that I have come back with a letter to our Prime Minister requesting her to approach the Indian Prime Minister and to request her to allow us to take these Kapilavastu Relics, the Begging Bowl Relics of Sopara, and the Devnimori Relics, the Ashes in iron safes without any veneration. I thought that all these Relics must be brought to Sri Lanka for veneration.

"If they are given to us, in Lanka, we will pay them the due respects, offer flowers, light lamps and chant the age-old Suttas and make them the powerful Relics they once were, as the presence of the Relics of the Buddha will always bless the person or country that has them. Now that she was in India it will be very easy for one Prime Minister to get the Indian Government to release all these Relics to be taken for public exposition and veneration, and for safe return after a few months or so. If this was done I know that blessings would come upon India and Sri Lanka, and to the whole world, as we venerate them in the proper way. I also knew that Sri Lanka will once again be a Dharmadeepa, if this was done. We are in possession of the major portion of the Relics of the Buddha and we have been preserving Buddhism and maintaining the rites and rituals and

principles. We are also in possession of the Pali Canon, the most authentic Buddhist Pali Text in its pristine purity. So we must have these Relics here in Sri Lanka through the courtesy of the people and the Government of India.

"My letter was handed over to the Prime Minister at the Buddha Vihara in Delhi on 13th Aril, 1976, and it was handed over to the High Commissioner for quick action as she wanted the Relics to be brought to Sri Lanka for Vesak or Poson. The High Commissioner readily took quick action. I sent letters to the Indian Prime Minister with copies of my letter to our Prime Minister and I also informed the Minister of Education, saw his Secretary in India, and met several Buddhist Members of Parliament about the matter. An appeal was also made in India and Sri Lanka and much publicity was given in the Sri Lanka newspapers, Lankadeepa and other papers, to the Kapilavastu Relics; and everyone was eagerly waiting to pay their respects to these precious Relics of the Buddha. Our High Commissioner took great pains to see that these Relics were brought for the benefit of all Sri Lankan Buddhists. If they were brought at that time they would have aroused the *Sraddha* of the people during the critical period of unrest, lack of food, drought, crop failures, indiscipline, unhappiness and suffering. We felt that this would have been possible if the Relics were brought to Sri Lanka. I wanted to take them to Kiri Vehera, chant Pirith for 3 to 7 days and then have them taken for veneration in all the Districts so that everyone would get the opportunity to pay their respects. Such was my original plan."¹ The text of the letters addressed by Mr. Noeyal Peiris to the Prime Minister of both countries are as follows:

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 26

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13/15, PRINCE STREET,
COLOMBO-11.
SRI LANKA.
Phone: 24774

12th April, 1976.

Hon. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike,
Prime Minister of Sri Lanka,
New Delhi, India

Dear Hon. Madam,

**BUDDHIST RELICS OF SOPARA, DEVNIMORI AND
KAPILAVASTU FOR EXPOSITION IN SRI LANKA
DURING VESAK OR POSON**

Many attempts to get your permission to request Hon. Mrs. Indira Gandhi for the release of these valuable Relics to be taken for public veneration in Sri Lanka have failed; on the last occasion you said that when an occasion comes it could be considered. Now is the best opportunity as it is the 2600 birth anniversary of Lord Buddha. As these Relics are kept inside iron safes without any veneration, it is our duty to see that we have Pirith Ceremonies during this year and get the blessings of them both for India and Sri Lanka, for our prosperity and safety.

Please be good enough to ask Mrs. Gandhi to release these Relics to be taken to Sri Lanka and have Pirith Ceremonies and get the blessings of the Triple Gem, which will help the two countries as well as the forthcoming Non-Aligned Summit. This will be a strong Force to make the THIRD WORLD into a great power as it is India and Sri Lanka that will lead in this to a great extent, and Buddhism will help to have PEACE in the world, as it was our late Prime Ministers, Pandit Nehru and Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who brought Buddhism and its principles to the forefront. As it was PANCHASEELA and BUDDHISM FOR WORLD

PEACE were always their theme. Now or never, as it is the most opportune time, when our relations Culturally and Economically, are so great and India has given us Buddhism and we have maintained and preserved same in its pristine glory, we will be doing the greatest service to the whole Buddhist world when we have these Buddhist Relics given its true place, and after our veneration and chanting of the age-old Suttas they will have the power of Lord Buddha's blessings which will make India and Sri Lanka to lead the world and to have PEACE all over, as there is unrest in the whole world today. Buddhism only can help to overpower the present situation. Both our countries will be economically sound and will help the THIRD WORLD to get peace and harmony and prosperity.

If it is possible for you to take them it will be very good. The Governor of Ceylon received it from India as they very gladly gave one portion to Ven. Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala Thero. After seeing the honours given to Pandit Bhagavanlal Indrajit for excavating and finding out the Pottery Fragments of the Begging Bowl of Lord Buddha, Ven. H. Sumangala Nayake Thero through the Governor of Ceylon at that time appealed to the Governor of Bombay, and the biggest portion of the Relics was sent to Ceylon in 1882, October 26th; it was handed over to Maha Mudaliyar Mr. Peter Dias Bandaranaike. They were received with great honour and pageantry at that time during British rule; now that its a Buddhist Govt. we should give more prominence, which will bless our two countries to a great extent.

SOPARA RELICS—

Pottery fragments of the Begging Bowl of Lord Buddha is at the Asiatic Society, Bombay. Its their property, but central Government sanction is required to remove them from India.

DEVNIMORI RELICS—

Ashes of Lord Buddha excavated from Devnimori by the M.S. University, Baroda. The Vice Chancellor is the custodian and permission from Central Govt. is required for removing same out of India.

KAPILAVASTU RELICS—

Lying at the Archaeology Survey of India, Nagpur. Permission from

the Director-General of Archaeology Survey of India, New Delhi, and sanction from the Central Government to release same to be taken out of India is required.

Please discuss this matter with Hon. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, while you are having your talks on other matters, and tell her the value of these Relics to the World Buddhists, and it will be brought back with certain amount of Blessings of the Buddha as we are maintaining the age-old traditions of the Buddha, and this will help both our countries to a great extent to overcome our own troubles at the moment-Economically and Culturally. Tell her please that we will look after them very carefully and return them back to India, but if she wishes, a portion of these Relics may be given to us for our own veneration to be kept in a suitable place for our own benefit. This will help India to a great extent. Our plans are to see that due publicity is given to all these Relics for the Buddhist Pilgrims to pay their respects, and that will be a great Tourist attraction for India. The above Asoka Centre was founded by me for this very purpose and to give the publicity it deserves. Till we took up this matter, these Relics were in these places without any one knowing same. Our intention is to see that every Buddhist pay their respects to these valuable Relics. With the blessings of the Triple Gem you will be able to do all your work, if this matter is also settled at this meeting and all plans have been made here. Only permission from her is required to release same. Thanking you.

Yours in Dhamma.

Sd/-Noeyal Peiris
Secretary-General

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13/5, PRINCE STREET,
COLOMBO-11,
SRI LANKA.

Phone: 24774
12th May 1976

Dear Hon. Madam,

BUDDHIST RELICS OF SOPARA, OF DEVNIMORI & KAPILAVASTU FOR EXPOSITION IN SRI LANKA IN MAY OR JUNE

The above Buddhist Relics are now in India. There are no arrangements made for public Exposition or for veneration of the Buddhist public; furthermore no publicity has been made about these valuable Relics so that the Buddhist public and those interested in Buddhism will pay their respects to them, as they have been lying in that state for the last so many years.

We have made an appeal to Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, who is a very good Buddhist to make an appeal to your Honour for the release of the Relics to be taken to Sri Lanka for the Exposition and veneration of the Buddhist public as well as for the veneration of the members of the Non-aligned Summit who will be visiting Sri Lanka in the near future. This will be a great event as there will be a very good publicity for India, having preserved these Relics, and all of them will be very glad to pay their respects.

A copy of the letter sent to her is attached herewith for your information, so that you will realise what our intentions are for making this request. Please be good enough to release same for public exposition in Sri Lanka and return back to India. A publicity campaign will make the existence of these Relics known to all of them.

SOPARA RELICS—

Pottery fragments of the Begging Bowl of Lord Buddha lying at the Asiatic Society of Bombay.

DEVNIMORI RELICS—

Lying at M.S. University of Baroda.

KAPILAVASTU RELICS—

Lying at Archaeological Survey of India at Nagpur.

Thanking You,

Yours in Dhamma.

Sd/-Noeyal Peiris
Secretary-General

Thus, the initiative to take the Relics to Sri Lanka was taken by Mr. Noeyal Peiris who, with his limitless energy at such an advanced age, always works for the cause of Buddhism. Undoubtedly the faith and devotion of a newly converted man are always far above those of the commoner, yet it must be emphasised that the influence of Buddhism on Mr. Noeyal Peiris, formerly a Christian, is unparalleled. The self-generating force and spirit with which he moves to propagate the Teachings of Buddhism and also to develop the places associated with that religion deserve appreciation from the Buddhists all around the world.

Though Mr. Noeyal Peiris visited Kapilavastu immediately after the news of the discovery of the city was published in the New Delhi, The Times of India daily of 24th January 1976, at the instance of the then High Commissioner, Mr. Justin Siriwardene, I happened to see him only on 12th May 1977, on the occasion of Buddha Purnima when the first Buddhist Governor of Bihar, His Excellency R.D. Bhandare was kind enough to evince keen interest in the remains at Kapilavastu while going round them. An exhibition of the Relics of Lord Buddha and the rich antiquities found during the excavations along with photographs was also arranged. It must be reiterated that it was only owing to the personal efforts of Mr. Noeyal Peiris that the Governor agreed to be present at the site on the solemn occasion. I very well recollect that in appreciation of the services of

Mr. Noeyal Peiris, His Excellency uttered a number of times that instead of Mr. Noeyal Peiris he should be called Noble Peiris. These words simply speak of the admiration, which the Governor had for the commendable services of Mr. Noeyal Peiris for the cause of Buddhism.

Describing the auspicious occasion of Buddha Purnima Mr. Noeyal Peiris said, "On the 13th of May, 1976, was the Vesak Full Moon day. I observed *Ata-Sil*. The party from Bihar along with the Governor, His Excellency R.D. Bhandare, arrived at 10.00 A.M. at the gate of the Kapilavastu stupa. We all met them and the Governor was very pleased to see me and the Ven Metiwela Sangharatna, Nayaka Thero. The Governor and party were accorded a grand welcome and they were taken to the place where *Pirith* was chanted. Thereafter the Governor along with others, lighted lamps, offered flowers and paid their respects to the Lord Buddha at the stupa. The *Maha Samaya Sutta* was chanted and after that he went and saw the ruins and went on asking many questions about the excavations and wanted everything explained fully. Mr. Srivastava explained every thing in great detail. I tape-recorded the whole discussion. The Governor was very pleased and after making a thorough inspection, saw the Exhibition which was organised for our benefit. Then followed a largely attended meeting where the Governor spoke about Lord Buddha and Buddhism. . . . His Excellency, R.D. Bhandare was the first Indian Buddhist to see the Relics and hold the casket in his hand. I was the first Sinhala Buddhist to see the Relics. At that historic moment I reaffirmed my *Adithhana* to bring the Relics to Sri Lanka.

"From that time onwards I went and saw the Indian Minister of Education's Secretary who was known to a friend of mine, and I represented matters and wanted the Indian Government to grant us permission to take these Relics to Sri Lanka, for veneration. Letters were written to the Indian Prime Minister and our High Commissioner in New Delhi. I met her personally and many of the officials and sought their permission and support for us to take the Relics to Sri Lanka for the benefit and serene joy of the Sri Lanka Buddhists.

"One day I telephoned the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Mr. Deshpande. He said that our High Commissioner was there with him. After he went away, I saw the Director General, and told him that since this matter of the Relics has been handed over to the

Sri Lanka High Commissioner and it was now a Government-to-Government matter, he could now in collaboration with our High Commissioner, be pleased to see that the Relics are sent as early as possible, to Sri Lanka. After more than a year we were able to get the required permission to bring the Relics to Sri Lanka. I went to Moneragala, and brought a silver casket which we had used to carry the Relics during the Perahera which we had started at Moneragala. After 14 months the Indian Government agreed to release the Kapilavastu Relics to be taken to Sri Lanka for Exposition. The Sri Lanka High Commissioner came to Sri Lanka to meet the Prime Minister and told her that the Relics can be brought for exposition now. He asked the Prime Minister who will go to bring the Relics. She at once said: "It was Noeyal Peiris who gave us all the information about the Kapilavastu Relics, he should go. You as High Commissioner in India should accompany the Relics and one more from the Cultural Ministry should go"

"I left New Delhi and reached Sri Lanka on the 28th May, 1976".¹

As it has already been made clear the inexhaustible energy with which Mr. Noeyal Peiris made vigorous efforts to take the relics to Sri Lanka stands unparalleled. In the letter which he handed over to Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka on the 13th April, 1976 at Buddha Vihara, New Delhi, he made an appeal to request her counterpart, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, esteemed Prime Minister of India to allow the Relics of Buddha to be taken to Sri Lanka for a brief period. Mrs. Bandaranaike handed over the letter of Mr. Noeyal Peiris to His Excellency Mr. Justin Siriwardene, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in India. The High Commissioner, no doubt, moved the matter immediately, but the final decision was bound to take a considerably long time. The request was not a simple one. Mr. Noeyal Peiris said, "Further investigations were also necessary as the Indian Government too had to act cautiously, as they did not want to displease Nepal, because there was a 100-year-old controversy over the exact location of Kapilavastu site. Thus 14 months passed by. If this record be chronologically true, it must be recorded here that it was Mrs. Bandaranaike who made the first appeal to the Indian Government for the release of these Relics. Though she did her

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 40

best to obtain the Relics for Sri Lanka there was a delay—perhaps the time was not ripe, perhaps the gods (Devas) were angry, perhaps some unwhole some (akusala) act of the past—was baulking her efforts.

“Thus we see that though an earlier Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, did her best to get the Relics to Sri Lanka, even after a postponement in 1976, she failed. We realized that for some unknown reason, 1976 was not the time! Nevertheless, may she too share in the Merits of this epoch-making event in the history of Sri Lanka, for it is her pioneering efforts that paved the way for this historic event in the annals of Sri Lanka that is now taking place throughout the length and breadth of this hallowed Isle of Lanka, where millions of Buddhist devotees and even non-Buddhists, are paying their humble tribute and respects to the corporeal Relics of the Supreme Buddha Gotama”.¹

With the efforts of the Honourable Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the struggle to carry the Relics to Sri Lanka was not over. There are so many slips between the cup and the lip. Mr. Noeyal Peiris writes in an interesting manner, “On the 8th June, 1977, when all arrangements were made to bring the Relics by the Air Ceylon plane of the 16th June, and three Air Ceylon passages had also been offered to bring the Relics from Delhi to Sri Lanka, Mr. K.H.M. Sumathipala, the former Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry, without making the necessary arrangements for the ceremonial handing over of the Relics at the Airport, started to cast doubts: “How can we believe one Indian who says that Kapilavastu is in India, when it is in Nepal”? He said that he must send someone to check up on this and stopped the bringing of these Relics. He went on to say: “Just because one Indian says that Kapilavastu is in India, how can we believe it? We cannot get fake things for our people to worship. We must send Dr. Wimalanada Tennekoon and get him to give a report, and if he says that they are genuine we will get them down, but not otherwise . . .” Then he told the meeting that he is sending a cable, and a cable was sent requesting the Indian Government to postpone the sending of the Kapilavastu Relics till after the 15th August, 1977. He was adamant

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 49

and all these things happened during the meeting that he had convened specially to make arrangements to have Police security, and to inform the Director of the National Museum, where the Relics were to have been placed, and to make all arrangements for the Exposition of the Relics in Sri Lanka.

"The First Secretary of the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka, Mr. D. Ramanathan was surprised and so were many of the representatives of the Buddhist Organisations. Mr. R.S.S. Gunawardene and many others, including myself, were shocked. The former Secretary was not prepared to take any advice or to give a hearing to anyone. He had made up his mind to stop the bringing of these Relics to Sri Lanka. At that time our High Commissioner, His Excellency Justin Siriwardene, was in Sri Lanka since his brother was seriously ill. I was not aware of this and sent him a cable asking him not to take any action as this was a dictatorial action of the Secretary without consulting the Minister of Cultural Affairs or the Prime Minister who were very interested in this matter and wished to get the Relics to Sri Lanka. Our Prime Minister had given all instructions to the High Commissioner in New Delhi to get the necessary permission from the Indian Government and see that the Relics were brought. Thus, after 14 months of investigations, the Indian Government released the Kapilavastu relics to be brought to Sri Lanka.

"There were many problems and several times the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India was contacted and he had to make a thorough investigation before he could release them to be sent out of India. As this was a Government-to-Government matter, the Indian Government had to satisfy themselves on many points. And, it was after all these matters were cleared and the Indian Government had given clearance, and wanted us to get two caskets and the sizes of these two were sent and the caskets were also brought to Colombo, that this ugly incident took place. This matter was brought to the notice of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Cultural Affairs, as they both had wanted these Relics to be got down immediately.

"When the postponement was conveyed to the Prime Minister, she asked: "How can the Secretary change the order that was given him? What does the Minister of Cultural Affairs say? The Minister was not aware of the sudden change of the order of the Prime Minister. When the

Prime Minister was told that a telegram had already been sent postponing the event to 15th August, 1977, she said: "He wants to go to Russia; he wants to go to Russia, and that is why he has done this." I contacted the Minister of Cultural Affairs at Dambulla and he said he will come down to Colombo to meet the Prime Minister.

"The seats in the Air Ceylon plane were booked to go on the 16th June, 1977, to bring the Relics to Sri Lanka. By the time however that the telegram was sent from here to our High Commissioner in India, the High Commissioner was already here in Sri Lanka, as his brother was seriously ill, and it was not possible to make special arrangements with the Indian Government. Furthermore, Dr. N.R. Banerjee too who was to have come with the Relics, had left for Paris. Thus, everything came to a standstill".¹

The above statements of Mr. Noeyal Peiris go a long way to reveal the prejudices which hanged over the Relics not only in the beginning, but for a very long time.

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 45

XI. JOURNEY TO SRI LANKA

Though the initiative to take the Relics to Sri Lanka for exposition and worship was taken by Mr. Noeyal Peiris as early as 13th of April, 1976, the ultimate decision on it had to wait for two years, particularly on account of the unyielding approach of Mr. K.H.M. Sumathipala, former Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry. Within a year thereafter both the lady Prime Ministers viz. Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike were ousted from power and the privilege of acceding to the request of taking the Relics to Sri Lanka fell into the hands of the Government headed by another Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai. Similarly, the hands of the receiving side were also changed. Now, the honour of receiving the Sacred Relics in Sri Lanka groomed the new President of the country, His Excellency J.R. Jayawardene. By the end of the year 1977 a cultural pact between the two countries was signed, which covered amongst other items, the case of the Relics to be carried to Sri Lanka. The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs of Sri Lanka, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle and the Honourable Minister of Education and Social Welfare of India, Dr. P.C. Chunder signed the cultural pact on behalf of their countries.

Commenting on the great feat of Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle, Mr. Noeyal Peiris said, "And, now, welcome to the Man of Destiny—the Honourable E.L.B. Hurulle, Minister of Cultural Affairs of the Sri Lanka Government. He, indeed, is the Man

of Destiny. He was destined to lead the delegation to India to bring the sacred Relics to Sri Lanka. There can never again be such an event in the entire career of Hon. Hurulle. He is a Man blessed by the Gods (Devas), for they found him to be the fitting instrument to carry this precious treasure to the shores of Sri Lanka. I can vouch for his having done a magnificent job, because I was a Member of the Delegation. The great achievement of Hon. Hurulle will be understood by the peoples of Sri Lanka, only when it is realized that for the first time in the history of the country, he was able to assemble the Maha Nayakas of the Malwatte and Asgiriya Chapters and the Maha Nayakas of the Amarapura and Raman-nya Nikayas (Sects) on one platform and make them go together united in this one Mission. Indeed, the sacred Relics of Kapilavastu united the three Nayakas on this one occasion, as it has never been done before. That the three Nayakas should come together subordinating their differences augur well for the well being of Sri Lanka. The arrival of the One-Eighth Portion of the corporeal Relics of the Blessed One is symbolic of the Buddha Himself visiting Sri Lanka—for the Fourth Time: (The earlier Visits, as all Buddhists know, were to Mahiyangana, Nagadipa and Kelaniya, long before the Parinibbana (i.e. Final Passing Away of the Blessed One)."¹

Commenting further on the delay in the final agreement to carry the Relics to Sri Lanka, Mr. Noeyal Peiris said, "Though, as I said, the initial request for the Kapilavastu Relics to be sent to Sri Lanka was made during the time of Mrs. Srimathi Indira Gandhi of India and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka, due to various hostile forces operating at that time, the responsibility fell upon the elder Statesmen of today in the two Republics—Shri Morarji Desai, Prime Minister of India, and His Excellency Junius Richard Jayawardene, President, along with Honourable R. Premadasa, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka—Statesmen who were destined to go in history—one for deciding to release the Sacred Relics from the New Delhi National Museum to be brought to Sri Lanka for Special Exposition in the months of Bak, Vesak, Posona and Esala, 1978, and the others for welcoming and accepting the sacred Relics on behalf of their country, which were brought to Sri Lanka for pious veneration by millions

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 50.

of their countrymen. Dr. Shri P.C. Chunder, Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture, officiated at the handing over ceremony in New Delhi to his Sri Lankan counterpart, the Honourable E.L.B. Hurulle, Minister of Cultural Affairs.

"It must also be recorded that were it not for the valuable assistance rendered by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, among whom were its Secretary, Mr. Nalin Ratnayaka, and especially Senior Assistant Secretary, Mr. T. Ranaviraja, and Mr. Asoka Liyanage, our efforts to bring these sacred Relics would not have been successful. The newspapers of India and Sri Lanka also deserve special mention for the wide coverage they gave this great event at all times.

"It is hoped that with the blessings and the immediate presence of these sacred Relics, which had been enshrined in Kapilavastu for over 2500 years, the pious hope of an Executive President, His Excellency J.R. Jayawardene, and his Prime Minister, the Hon. R. Premadasa of creating a Free and Righteous (Dharmista) Society in Sri Lanka, will soon be realized. Only then will Sri Lanka be a DHAMMADEEPA:

"What was started by one, must of necessity, be carried on by another. And, so it goes on: The Message of the Blessed One is a Message for the whole world which is immersed in Materialism. The task of carrying forward this Message is now the Responsibility of the peoples of Sri Lanka. May they be blessed with the wisdom to accomplish this task by carrying the Message of the Buddha to the four corners of the world. Politics are outside Dhamma Work. May the two never be mixed. The Master has shown us the Light. May we have the wisdom to spread that Light among those still living in Darkness and who are thirsting for this Knowledge, which only Sri Lanka can give. May the Message of the Buddha—PEACE, GOODWILL AND HARMONY—pervade the whole world. May the Message of the Buddha save mankind—today and in the Days to come. Let all Buddhists—wherever they might be—lend a Helping Hand—for the Good of the Many, for the Happiness of the Many, and for the Welfare of the World."¹

1. Noeyal Peiris, My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU, Colombo 1978, p. 50

The firm belief of Mr. Noeyal Peiris followed by the dedicated efforts he made to carry the Relics of Buddha to Sri Lanka ultimately led to his honourable success. The Government of India after accepting the request of the Government of Sri Lanka to allow the Relics to be taken to that country, the momentous date of 20th April, 1978 was fixed for the purpose. Before taking the final decision on the date, I was called by the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India to New Delhi for handing over the caskets containing the Relics. The Government of India took a bold decision in not permitting any official to carry the Relics to Sri Lanka. The alternate step taken by the Government was to ask the officials to hand over the Relics in a sealed transparent case and take back in the same condition.

When I reached New Delhi with the caskets I received a shocking news that, instead of an out of the turn promotion on account of the internationally recognised meritorious work I was superseded. I was well aware of the unhappiness of the Director General with me, as already mentioned in the preceding pages, but I never expected that his wrath would not hesitate in touching the extremes and make me a victim of the same. I found myself helpless. The Director General paid greater importance to something else and ignored my epoch-making work completely. He desired me to toe his lines even if I was required to wipe out the truth and hard facts brought to light by my work. Since it was not possible for me to adjust to his unsound desires, the result was before me. Let it be made very clear in this context that, had I succumbed to the wishes of the Director General, my meritorious work would have been lost into oblivion. Moreover, sycophancy was something foreign to my nature right from the beginning. I could never feel happy in supporting any unhealthy views which were devoid of any truth. This was not the first occasion when I realized that, truth and honesty have to be shelved completely, if a man has any ambition for higher positions, but I found it impossible to bring out a change in my nature. The maxim of MOST HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT SERVANT preached by the foreigners has taken such a deep root that the same runs freely in our blood. A man will continue to achieve higher positions, if he has cultivated the habit of standing with begging bowl and bent head before his higher officials, irrespective of the facts of capability and meritorious work. A straightforward man always

trying to stand by the Truth is born to suffer. He can only console himself with a clear conscience, but the days are fast approaching when such a man will be considered nothing more than a fool.

Mr. Noeyal Peiris has given a graphic description of the Journey of the Delegation from Sri Lanka to bring the Relics. "On the 19th April, 1978, the Sri Lanka delegation took off at 6.00 A.M. from the Katunayake International Airport in a special Sri Lanka Air Force plane after *Seth Pirith* was chanted by the Maha Sangha at the V.I.P. Lounge, and landed at the Madras Airport. Mr. Gautamadasa, the Deputy High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India, along with many other officials including the Minister of Education of Tamilnadu, met the Sri Lanka Delegation which was led by Hon. E.L.B. Hurulle, the Minister of Cultural Affairs of the Sri Lanka Government".¹

The delegation from Sri Lanka to bring the Relics comprised (1) Hon. E.L.B. Hurulle, (2) Venerable Sirimalwatte Ananda, Maha Nayaka Thera (Malwatta), (3) Venerable Palipana Chandananda, Maha Nayaka Thera (Asgiriya), (4) Venerable Kosgoda Dhammawana, Maha Nayaka Thera, (5) Venerable Induruwe Uttarananda, Maha Nayaka Thera, (6) Mr. Nalin Ratnayaka, (7) Mr. Sarath Wimalaweera, (8) Mr. Sarath Liyanage, (9) Mr. T.B. Beddewela, (10) Mr. U.B. Seneviratne and (11) Mr. Noeyal Peiris.

Mr. Noeyal Peiris said further, "The Delegation was served with breakfast while TV cameramen recorded the events before the Delegation left for Nagpur. After refuelling, the Delegation left for New Delhi, where Hon. Dr. P.C. Chunder, Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture met Hon. E.L.B. Hurulle and the members of the Delegation who were extended a cordial welcome, as TV cameramen recorded the events. Thereafter the Delegation left for the Asoka Hotel".¹

The function of handing over of the Relics to the Delegation from Sri Lanka was organised in the National Museum on the 20th April, 1978 at 4.30 P.M. On instructions from highest authorities I was called upon to reach New Delhi well in time, so as to accompany the Delegation with the

1 Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 52

Relics in the chartered plane to Sri Lanka. The occasion was no doubt very happy and honourable but, poisoned by bitter tastes. While I was at New Delhi on the last occasion, the Director General had asked me to prepare some lectures on Kapilavastu, which I might have to deliver in Sri Lanka. He, on his own, proposed to the Government of India for a delegation of three persons from the Archaeological Survey of India headed by M.N. Deshpande. The second member proposed was Dr. (Mrs.) D. Mitra, the then Joint Director General. I was, therefore, asked to keep in readiness for the trip. I do not know how the proposal submitted by M.N. Deshpande was turned down and I was the only official who was allowed to accompany the Relics. The decision of the Government of India brought in its chain another curse on me. The Director General was not contented by the action of superseding me. He made another attempt to punish me. An order was issued transferring me to the Museums Branch with headquarters at Calcutta. During the entire career of my twenty-six years of service in the Archaeological Survey of India, I was never posted in the Branch. The transfer was justified on numerous grounds. In the first instance, it was said that the branch being a very important one, with many officers, a senior man should head it. In support of this ground it was proclaimed that the officers of the Archaeological Survey of India should have experience in all the branches of the Department. No one need have any objection in any policy framed by the Government or any Department, if the same is applied to all in an indiscriminate manner. I may point out in this context that the Director General had no grounds to make me a victim of his wrath, because I was in no way an instrument in the scrapping of the proposal of the delegation submitted by him to the Government. The grounds on which the proposal was turned down are best known to the Government or highest officials of the Archaeological Survey of India.

I revert back again to the main theme in the words of Mr. Noeyal Peiris. "On 20th April, 1978, at 4.30 P.M. a ceremony was held at the National Museum, New Delhi, where, after Pansil was administered by the Maha Sangha, Dr. Hon. Chunder handed over the Relics to Hon. E.L.B. Hurulle who accepted them on behalf of President His Excellency J.R. Jayawardene and the people of Sri Lanka. Three blasts of a conch shell were blown by me to invite and invoke the blessings of the Devas on our journey back to Sri Lanka. I then made an offering of a Begging Bowl

full of white flowers, seven Lotus flowers, a sheaf of Betel and a Buddhist Flag which I had brought with me from Sri Lanka, to the Kapilavastu Relics, as a special Aradhana (invitation), to visit our country, Sri Lanka, as if I was inviting the Lord Buddha Himself, to Sri Lanka.

"Going down on my knees thereafter, I made a further Aradhana (invitation) with the appeal that the Relics accompanying us to Sri Lanka would bless our people and our country with peace, harmony and prosperity. Several speeches were then made in the course of which the Venerable Pandita Kosgoda Dhammawansa, Maha Nayaka Thera, spoke in Hindi. I was also requested to interpret Mr. Hurulle's speech into English"¹

I humbly appeal to the readers to forgive me for digressing again from the main subject. As mentioned above, a number of personalities delivered speeches on the memorable occasion. The Additional Director General (Director General being out of the country) welcomed the delegates and before formally handing over the Relics to the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs of Sri Lanka, our own Honourable Minister delivered a brief speech. It may appear to be surprising that my name was not mentioned by anyone, though the speech of our Minister was prepared in my office itself. The vacuum was, however, blasted by the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs from Sri Lanka, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle. At the very outset of his speech he said, "I am very sorry to point out that one very important name has not been mentioned. I feel proud and honoured to mention his name. He is Mr. K.M. Srivastava, who has discovered the Relics. It is only on account of him that we are here today to take the Relics to our country."

The speech of the Honourable Minister was bound to create a new sensation. The Additional Director General, B.K. Thapar, rising to the occasion searched me amongst the audience in a hectic manner and took me to the dais and introduced to the dignitaries. The correspondents of various newspapers thereafter asked me many questions to know the details of the discovery. The following news item appeared in the New Delhi edition of Statesman on the 21st March, 1978.

"The sacred relics of Lord Buddha excavated from the stupa in Piprahwa, in Eastern U.P. believed to be the site of Kapilavastu, on March

1. Neoyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo, 1978, p. 53.

20, 1978, were handed over to Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle, Minister for Cultural Affairs, Sri Lanka, at a function at the National Museum, New Delhi, on Thursday, for a six-week exposition in Sri Lanka.

"Dr. P.C. Chunder, Union Minister for Education, Social Welfare and Culture, who handed over the relics at a solemn ceremony, said that the occasion, symbolized the unbroken bonds of friendship which the two countries have had since time immemorial.

"Buddha", he said, "transcended time and place and gave the world a message which has as much validity now as it had then." "Sri Lanka", he said, "has preserved the traditions of Buddhism in a manner which is unique to that country and these traditions to-day have influenced other parts of world, including India.

"Dr. Chunder said that the dialogue between Sri Lanka and India is written on the stone walls of rock-shelters, monuments, cultural traditions, painting traditions and in the minds of man

"With the handing over of the relics of Lord Buddha's mahaparinirvana, he said, the two countries had established yet another link with each other. He hoped the spirit with which India had handed over the relics for exposition would spread beyond the two countries.

"Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle said that the leaders of all the three religious sects following Buddhism in Sri Lanka had come to Delhi to receive the sacred relics with him. This showed the veneration with which the relics were held in his country.

"The relics, he said, would be exposed in 44 different places in Sri Lanka during the six weeks for public veneration. The ceremony, he said, marked a great day in history of the two countries.

"The request for the relics, he said, was made in November last year. He hoped that the Indian Government would agree to give a part of the relics to Sri Lanka for permanent keeping after seeing the veneration with which they were held there.

"Mr. K.M. Srivastava, Superintendent of Archaeology in Nagpur, who had excavated the relics is going to Sri Lanka to-day for a fortnight. He told the reporter that in 1898 a vessel had been found at the Stupa with the inscription that the "relics belonging to Buddha of the Sakya commu-

'nity are kept here". The inscription was in Prakrit in Brahmi script.

"Mr. Srivastava said that since no one could find the relics, the meaning of the inscription was changed. However, he felt certain that the relics must be underground. His team worked for a month in 1971 and for a month and a half in 1972 when six metres below the earth two burnt brick chambers were found. In each of the chambers was a casket of steatite. One contained 10 pieces and the other 12.

"The digging continued until 1976 and the identity of Kapilvastu was established near the place where the relics were found.

"The delegation from Sri Lanka had brought a large golden casket with a gold stupa to encase the two steatite caskets with the relics. After the relics had been formally handed over a large number of people passed by them, and offered flowers."

After the ceremony of handing and taking over of the relics was over, the sacred remains were taken to the High Commission of Sri Lanka in India. The depth of reverence the people of Sri Lanka have for the Relics can be gauged from the fact that they were never kept on the ground right from the time they were taken over. Commenting on the journey Mr. Noeyal Peiris said, "The Relics were then taken in a motorcade to the Sri Lanka High Commission where they were placed on a special table inside the Shrine Room. Pirith was chanted by the Members of the Maha Sangha. The Begging Bowl is to remain in the same place till the Holy Relics are returned. Pirith chanting was carried out till morning by Mrs. Basnayake, wife of His Excellency Arthur Basnayake".¹

The Delegation from Sri Lanka was to leave for Sri Lanka with the Relics on the 21st April 1978. I was requested by the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle to reach Asoka Hotel by 11.00 A.M., so as to accompany him to Sri Lanka in the chartered aircraft. Accordingly I joined the team at the Asoka Hotel and within a short time we left for Palam Airport to undertake the journey to Sri Lanka. Since the chartered aircraft was small, it was not possible to take a direct flight to Colombo in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the Buddhists of Nagpur in India

1. Noeyal Peiris, *My Pilgrimage TO THE LOST CITY OF KAPILAVASTU*, Colombo 1978, p. 53

wished to pay their ovation to the Relics on their trip to Sri Lanka. Hence, a halt for more than two hours was arranged at the Nagpur Airport. The Buddhists who paid their respects to the Relics were headed by Venerable Ananda Kausalayayana there. Nagpur is considered to be a great centre of Buddhists, because it was at this place where Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Law Minister in the Cabinet of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, along with five lakh (5,00,000) Indians embraced the religion of Buddhism.

With a beautiful photograph the following news appeared in the Nagpur Times of March 22, 1978 under the bold heading of 'Many Pay Homage To Sacred Relics of Buddha'. "The sacred relics of Lord Bhagwan Buddha which were found in Kapilavastu were flown today from Delhi to Sri Lanka via Nagpur. When the plane reached Sonagaon aerodrome, a large number of Buddhists paid homage to them. Among those present were Bhadant Anand Kaushalyayana, Mr. Hansraj Gajbhiye, Bhikku Mendhrankar and a number of local bhikkus. Accompanying the sacred relics were Mr. Hurulle, Sri Lanka's Minister of Cultural Affairs, Secretary of his ministry, and high religious dignitaries. The relics were discovered by Mr. Srivastava of Archaeological Survey of India. The relics will be in Sri Lanka for three months following a request of that Government".

The chartered aircraft left Nagpur after refuelling and the homage ceremony and reached Madras Airport in the evening. In Madras special arrangements were made to keep the Relics at a suitable place in the Madras Museum. The Relics were well guarded by Armed Police specially arranged for the occasion. The Delegation thereafter moved to the Coromondal Hotel for the night's stay. In the morning of 21st a large stream of devotees continued to flow to the Madras Museum to pay their respects to the sacred Relics. At about 11.00 A.M., on the 21st April the Holy Relics were collected from the Madras Museum and the Delegation left for the Airport on the final leg of journey to Colombo. Like earlier occasions the caskets were placed on a special table inside the plane, and carried to Sri Lanka amidst chanting of Pirith all the time by the great monks of the Maha Sangha.

The special Sri Lanka Air Force plane flying the Buddhist flag reached Katunayaka International Airport at Colombo at 2.15 P.M., as already scheduled.

XII. RELICS IN SRI LANKA

Groomed in a befitting manner the Katunayaka International Airport at Colombo was all in cheers and blossoms to welcome the Sacred Relics on the 22nd April 1978. All the distinguished personalities of the country including the highest officials like the President and Prime Minister were present at the Airport to receive the Relics with full honours. Covering the details of the momentous occasion the Sunday Observer of Colombo printed the following news in its edition of 23rd March, 1978 in bold letters.

"A SHOWER OF SOFT FLOWER PETALS CASCADED ON THE KATUNAYAKE AIRPORT TARMAC AS PRESIDENT J.R. JAYAWARDENE RECEIVED THE CASKET CONTAINING THE SACRED KAPILAVASTU RELICS FROM THE MINISTER OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS MR. E.L.B. HURULLE YESTERDAY—BAK FULL MOON POYA DAY.

"The shower fell from an Air Force helicopter circling overhead as the President began walking along the red carpet and pavada up to the Airport's VIP lounge carrying the casket on his head.

"Earlier Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle, who led Sri Lanka's delegation to India to bring back the relics, appeared at the head of the gangway bearing the casket. Magul bera was beaten, conches blown and Seth Pirith chanted as Mr. Hurulle handed over the casket to Sri Lanka's head of State.

"The special Sri Lanka Air Force plane flying the Buddhist flag, which had left Nagpur Airport earlier in the day, arrived sharp on schedule at 2.15 P.M. Pavada was rolled out as the plane was sighted and the

President, Prime Minister, the Secretaries of the three main Nikayas, India's High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Shri Gurbachan Singh and President's Secretary Mr. W.M.P.B. Menikdiwela walked up to the plane as it taxi-led to a halt like a bird come to roost".

Before the chartered aircraft reached Colombo Airport all the members of the delegation dressed themselves in white shirt and white *lungi*, the traditional Buddhist dress on religious occasions. When the aircraft grounded to a halt, the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle lifted the big case containing the caskets on his head and walked down through the steps. A white umbrella was spread over the case by the great man Mr. Noeyal Peiris. The entire ceremony was performed amidst play of folk music and dance. After alighting from the aircraft the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs transferred the relics from his head to that of His Excellency Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, President of the Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Sunday Times published the news of the arrival of the relics in a little different words on 23rd March 1978. They are as follows:

"Cries of 'Sadhu' rent the air at the Bandaranaike International Airport yesterday afternoon as the special Sri Lanka Air Force plane bringing the Buddha relics from Kapilavastu touched down.

"Conch shells were blown and to the throb of magulbera and other traditional heraldic music and the chanting of "bakthi gatha" (virtues of the Buddha) the President, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, walked upto the aircraft and received the casket containing the Sacred Relics from Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle, Minister of Cultural Affairs.

"Among those who followed the President were Mr. R. Premadasa, Prime Minister, other Ministers, members of the Diplomatic Corps, including Mr. Gurbachan Singh, High Commissioner for India and representatives of various Buddhist associations."

The Sacred Relics were carried by the President and Prime Minister on their head alternately from the tarmac to the V.I.P. lounge at the Airport. Commenting on it the Sunday Observer wrote, "Amidst the strains of devotional singing the relics were brought alternately by the President and Prime Minister to the upper floor of the V.I.P. lounge. There the gold casket mounted on a box was placed on an antique table

under a white canopy.

"Encircling the table were several huge elephant tusks and tall silver bowls of flowers"

The occasion was considered so sacred and auspicious that the distinguished gathering never tried to have armed chair for their seat. The entire gathering sat on the floor to pay their homage and respects to the Relics of Buddha brought from India. All those assembled in the gathering took their turn one by one to offer flowers and other objects of adoration to the Relics. Describing the occasion the Sunday Observer of 23rd March 1978 used the following words, - "After the congregation had sat on mats and cushions on the floor the offering of flowers began. The following offered trays of flowers. The Mahanayakas of the Malwatte and Asgiriya chapters, and the Amarapura and Ramanna Nikayas, the President, Prime Minister, Mr. Hurulle, the Indian High Commissioner, Minister of Textile Industries, Mr. Wijepala Mendis, Minister of Health, Mr. Gamini Jayasuriya and Minister of Food and Cooperatives Mr. S.B. Herath.

"Among the others who were present were Justice Minister Mr. K.W. Devanayagam, Transport Minister Mr. M.H. Mohamed, Chief Justice Mr. Neville Samarakoon, Nuwara Eliya-Maskeliya Third MP, Mr. S. Thondaman, Deputy Irrigation Minister, Mr. A.M.S. Adhikari, Deputy Posts Minister, Mr. A. Pillapitiya and MPs.

"Pansil was administered by the Mahanayaka of the Malwatte chapter the Ven. Sirimalwatte Ananda. Anusasanas were delivered by the Ven. Ananda, the Mahanayaka of the Asgiriya Chapter, Ven. Palipane Chandananda, the Chief Mahanayaka of the Amarapura Sangha Sabha, the Ven. Kosgoda Dhammavansa and the Mahanayaka of the Ramanna Nikaya, Ven. Induruwe Uttarananda"

I could never dream of the honour which I received in the country of Sri Lanka. The honour made me feel for the first time that my work of bringing to light the Relics of Lord Buddha and the identification of Kapilavastu had been recognised. I was extended the treatment of a great V.I.P. It was a matter of great surprise to me when His Excellency J. R. Jayawardene, President of the country offered me a seat by his side in the V.I.P. lounge before the commencement of the ceremonies. He

also took delight in introducing me to the distinguished people as the discoverer of the Relics.

After the administration of Pansil and offering of flowers the great President delivered his speech in Singhalese. The English version of the speech as published by the Sunday Times of 23rd March 1978 is as follows:

"The bringing of the sacred relics of the Buddha from Kapilavastu was an historic event which if correctly viewed could help change society in Lanka to one of peace, prosperity and justice, said the President, Mr. J.R. Jayawardene.

"He said that Sri Lanka's ties with India dated back to thousands of years. During those long years there were several historic events such as the visit of Prince Mahindra, the bringing of the Sri Maha Bodhi sapling, the writing of the Tripitaka by Buddhaghosa, the writing of the Visuddhi Maga and the visit of Angarika Dhammapala to India and the setting up of the Mahabodhi Society.

"The opportunity the people now had of venerating the relics of the Buddha was as valid as if they had been able to see the living Buddha himself.

"The presence of the relics should be a source of inspiration to all and an opportunity to bring about a complete change in society so that it would be free of evil and people could live in harmony, peace and goodwill and help improve the lot of the poor.

"He thanked the Indian Government and the Indian High Commissioner for the goodwill and cooperation in getting the relics here".

A slightly different version of the speech appeared in the Sunday Observer edition of the same date. It was as follows:

"Speaking at the airport President Jayawardene recalled the ties of friendship that have existed between Sri Lanka and India from time immemorial. During this period the Singhalese people and the teachings of the Buddha had been inseparably linked. There were various memorable land-marks in this relationship such as the arrival of Arahata Mahinda to Sri Lanka, the bringing in of the Sri Maha Bodhi, the transcription of the Tripitaka by Ven. Buddhaghosha and in this century the establishment of the Maha Bodhi Society by the Angarika Dharmapala.

"Now the Kapilavastu relics too had arrived.

"All of us must consider ourselves fortunate to pay homage to these Buddha relics, Mr. Jayawardene said. He thanked the Indian Government and Mr. K.M. Srivastava, the Indian archaeologist who discovered the relics for making this exposition possible.

"May the blessings of these sacred relics enable us to usher in a new life for the humble masses of the country, Mr. Jayawardene wished."

The next distinguished personality to deliver his speech was the Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr. R. Premadasa. The sum and substance of the speech of the Prime Minister as it appeared in the Sunday Observer is as follows:-

"Prime Minister Mr. Premadasa said that Sri Lanka had preserved the Buddha's teachings intact. Now the arrival of the Kapilavastu relics was akin to having the Buddha himself in our midst. The highest and noblest tribute we could pay the Enlightened one was to model our lives on his dharma, he added."

During the course of his speech the Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle referred to the Tooth Relic which was already in Sri Lanka. The following words of his speech were published by the Sunday Observer.

"Cultural Affairs Minister Mr. Hurulle said that since the Buddha's Tooth Relic was brought to Sri Lanka this was the first time that Buddha relics were being brought here. He hoped that the relationship between the temple and the village which had grown closer recently, would lead to the dharmishta society, which was the Government's objective"

The High Commissioner of India His Excellency Gurbachan Singh said on the occasion, "I was fortunate to be in Sri Lanka at this time when the relics were being brought from his home country to his host country". He added further that Hindus considered the Buddha as one of the ten *avatars* of Vishnu and paid homage to him.

The entire ceremony at the airport lounge was organized in an adept manner and it took at least two hours. After the close of the ceremony the relics were carried by the Honourable Prime Minister on his head from the airport lounge to the ransivige which carried them to Colombo in a

motorcade on motorcycles. The truck in which the relics were transported was donated by one individual for the purpose. Both the sides of the road through which the procession passed were decorated in a befitting manner by the citizens themselves. A large number of school boys standing in a disciplined manner waved the Buddhist flag. Bringing out the scene of the occasion Sunday Observer published the following words:

"From the Jetawanaramaya the relics were taken in a procession to the Vidyodaya Pirivena in Maligakanda. Large crowds of white-clad school children and devotees lined the route along which fluttered a serene row of Buddhist flags. Several tastefully mounted pandals also spanned the road hung with bunting and streamers.

"Accompanying the relics yesterday were Ven. Neluwe Jinaratana Thero Sanghanayaka, and Mr. K.M. Srivastava the Superintendent of the Department of Archaeology of India, who was responsible for the discovery of the relics."

A well known fact it is that a great saint never dies. Miraculous feats are exhibited by a great man not only during the time he is physically alive but, even after he enters Mahaparinirvana. The belief was corroborated on the occasion of the arrival of the relics in Sri Lanka. The country was passing through a severe drought-like condition in the absence of monsoons. There was every apprehension that the conditions may lead to complete power break-down at any time. But the Great Lord came to the rescue of the country. When the procession was not very far from the Vidyodaya Pirivena, where the relics were to be kept, a heavy downpour set in and all those marching in the procession were completely drenched. The elephants, which also participated in the procession, felt a little uneasy. The heavy downpour brought a great relief to the country. In this context I brought back to my memory the occasion of my first visit to Kapilavastu when there was a heavy rainfall.

On arrival at the Vidyodaya Pirivena, the relics were received at the gate by the Ven. Pandit Panamigala Jinaratana Nayaka Thera and handed over to Messrs. H.W. Amara Suriya and Gamini Jayasuriya on behalf of the Dayaka Sabha and the Vidyadhara Sabha. Mr. Jayasuriya then carried the casket to the Sri Sumangala Dharma Salawa, where the Ven. Pandit Akuratiye Amarawansa Nayaka Thera received it. After the relics were

placed on a special dais by Honourable Mr. Hurulle, Pansil was followed by a special floral and Gilanpasa pooja. Next it was the turn of the V.I.P.s including foreign diplomats to offer pooja after which the public exposition began. A seven day pirith ceremony under the patronage of the Ven. Pandit Paravahera Pranganand Nayaka Thera was also organised.

It was already too late when I reached the Oberoi Hotel where all arrangements for my boarding and lodging were made by the Government of Sri Lanka. I was also exhausted on account of the day-long programmes. Hence, the Archaeological Commissioner and the Assistant Archaeological Commissioner considered it much better to allow me to have dinner followed by rest. While leaving they promised to meet me again the following morning.

Next morning i.e., on 23rd March, 1978, the two officials of the Archaeological Department of Sri Lanka were kind enough to visit my room in the Hotel to make out a programme during the period of my stay in Sri Lanka. As a matter of fact the officials desired me to stay on in Sri Lanka for more than a fortnight, but it was not possible for me to accede to their request, since the Government of India had once taken a decision on the period of my stay in the country. I was requested by the Archaeological Commissioner to deliver a few lectures at various places both on the relics as well as identification of Kapilavastu. He advised the Assistant Commissioner Mr. M.H. Sirisoma to frame a day to day programme during the course of my stay in Sri Lanka. For the first few days I was to stay on in Colombo itself to go round places of interest including the Department of Archaeology and National Museum. The days of lecture were also fixed. The Assistant Commissioner, Mr. M.H. Sirisoma was deputed by the Government of Sri Lanka to look after my comforts. He divided my programme in two parts. The first one covered my lectures and sight seeing in Colombo itself, and the later visit to some of the most important monuments in Sri Lanka. During my stay in Colombo special meetings with the President, Prime Minister and the Minister of Cultural Affairs were also arranged.

While I was at Colombo I used to pay at least one visit daily to the place where the relics were kept for exposition and worship. It was simply a matter of great astonishment to see the long queue extending more than

a mile in which people were quietly standing under the scorching Sun simply to worship and pay homage to the relics. The long queue manifested the deep faith and devotion of the people. The following news item in the Daily News of Colombo on 25th March, 1978 under the heading Mile-long queue to worship relics will be helpful in visualizing the picture of the scene.

"Nearly 200,000 devotees have paid homage to the Sacred Kapilavastu relics now on exposition at the Vidyodaya Pirivena, Maligakanda.

"The mile-long queue yesterday had stretched as far as Marandana station in evening.

"The police have been requested to make Maligakanda Road one-way for traffic during the relic exposition in Colombo.

"On Tuesday night the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. E.L.B. Hurulle and Mrs. Hurulle, Cultural Secretary Mr. Nalin Ratnaika and Mrs. Ratnaika offered gilānpasa and Mal Pooja to the sacred relics, and sprinkled the relic chamber and the mandapaya with perfumed water.

"Mr. Hurulle addressing the vast gathering said, many a miracle had taken place from the day preparations were made to discover the relics. First, when Mr. Srivastava went to Kapilavastu, there were heavy rains, when the relics were brought to Sri Lanka there was torrential downpour, now the rain gods had given their fullest blessings to the devotees to worship the sacred relics in comfort, Mr. Hurulle added.

"He also said that before the arrival of the relics the whole country entertained a fear that the drought of the Maskeliya area would keep the country without electricity. With the arrival of the relics the continuous rainfall in the area had dispelled that fear.

"These incidents proved in great measure the aim of President J.R. Jayawardene and the Government to build a society of righteousness would be a reality".

The special meeting with the President of the country His Excellency J.R. Jayawardene was arranged at 9.30 A.M. on the 27th March, 1978. Mr. Nalin Ratnaika, Secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs was to accompany me. The President was so anxious to meet me and listen about the discovery of the relics that he instructed his Secretary

to cancel all other programmes of the day. I, accompanied by the Cultural Affairs Secretary, reached the residence of the President at 9.25 A.M. When the news of our arrival was conveyed to the President inside, he came out to welcome us. Before we entered the residence with the President, the Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry, Mr. Nalin Ratnaike pointed out to the President that I wanted to present a book on Kapilavastu. He had already made arrangements for a photographer to take a good snap of the presentation. The President was kind enough to wait for the presentation and the photographer clicked the camera.

We were entertained at a breakfast by the President. The great President listened with rapt attention to my account on the discovery of the relics. He developed such a keen interest in the discovery that he decided to make out a pilgrimage programme to Kapilavastu and other important Buddhist sites in India. A very good account of the intentions of the President appeared in Daily News of Colombo on 28th March, 1978 with the heading 'Visit to Indian Buddhist Shrines proposed' in the following words:

"President J.R. Jayawardene had expressed a desire to go on pilgrimage to sacred Buddhist places in India. On Saturday, when Krishna Murari Srivastava, Superintendent of Archaeology of India, discoverer of the Kapilavastu relics and described by Mr. B.B. Lal, former Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India as one of the "Greatest Indians" presented President Jayawardene with a copy of his book "Discovery of the Kapilavastu Relics", he was asked by the President to draw up an itinerary for him to visit all the sacred Buddhist shrines in India.

"How much time did he have, inquired Mr. Srivastava. The President replied: "Pilgrimages have no time limit.

"Mr. Srivastava has suggested November as the best month for such a pilgrimage.

"The excavations which led to the discovery of the Kapilavastu Relics, one of the many excavations he had undertaken in his 25-year-old career began in 1971 and continued till 1977 said Mr. Srivastava.

"In 1972 the relics, the sacred bone fragments of Gautama Buddha enshrined in the stupa by the Sakyas and the monastery were found. This

was followed in 1973 by the terracotta sealings which bore the legend of Kapilavastu, thus settling the 100-year controversy between India and Nepal with Nepal claiming that Kapilavastu was sited in Tilaurakot in the Nepalese Kingdom.

"The Kapilavastu legend recorded in the Brahmi script reads thus.

"Om, Devaputra Vihare, Kapilavastu, Bhikkhu Sanghas.

"The monastery and the stupa were found in Piprahwa and the township adjacent to it in Ganwaria comprising massive structures covering a vast area said Mr. Srivastava.

"Besides Kapilavastu Mr. Srivastava also discovered Sujata Kuti where Sujata who offered Prince Siddhartha milk rice before he attained Enlightenment was born.

"In 1962 India answered the UNESCO appeal to world governments to help salvage the antiquities that were in danger of being submerged by the building of the Aswan Dam by sending their foremost archaeologist Mr. Srivastava to the United Arab Republic."

It was the duty of at least one Minister of the Government to pay homage to the relics daily. A large number of distinguished personalities offered their prayers to the relics. On the 28th March, 1978 one of the former Ministers of the Government of India, Dr. R.R. Diwakar happened to visit the place where the relics were kept. Dr. Diwakar, Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi and former Governor of Bihar had gone to Sri Lanka as a guest of the "Thantai Chelva Memorial Trust" to deliver a series of lectures on Mahatma Gandhi of whom he was a follower.

The visit of the former Indian Minister to pay homage to the relics was considered by him as a great experience of life. The feelings of the Indian Minister were conveyed by the Daily News of Colombo of 29th March, 1978 in the following words under the caption 'Scientists cannot understand this experience'.

"A former Indian Minister who paid homage to the Buddha Relics from Kapilavastu on Thursday described it as great experience' for him.

"I call it an experience because the atmosphere there and all around made me realize how the hearts of millions and millions of people are

responding, and that after 2000 years, Dr. R.R. Diwakar, Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi and former Governor of Bihar said.

"Dr. Diwakar in his address to the Buddha Relics said: "What is it that calls for a response and gives a response? What is the relic scientifically considered? If we give it to the physicist or the Chemist, they will come out with a formula. Yet, the scientist will say 'all religions are bunkum, there is no God. Only those that can be tested in laboratories and test tubes exist. They have not the courtesy to say, "We do not understand this phenomena.

"Dr. Diwakar asked: "What is this reverence? What is this love of God or love of any supreme power? All these do not find any place in the dictionary of the Scientist. Yet, it is very much a part and parcel of our lives. If we go deep into our own hearts we would find that the inspiration is from some factor unknown to the scientist".

Though the relics of Buddha from Kapilavastu were carried to Sri Lanka for a period of six weeks only in the first instance, the time was extended on account of heavy demand from the citizens of various places in the country. All of them wished to carry the relics to their own city and town for the blessings of Lord Buddha. During the course of exposition and worship at various places huge amounts were also offered. According to the decision taken by the Government of Sri Lanka the entire amount was to be deposited in the bank for the development of Kapilavastu. As a sequel to the heavy demand from the citizens of Sri Lanka the relics were allowed to be retained in that country for double the time than originally agreed upon. The relics were carried to all the cities and towns with the same dignity and honour as they received at Colombo. The relics remained in Sri Lanka for a total number of 95 days.

The itinerary of the relics in Sri Lanka was as follows:-

22nd April 787

to 3.5.78

3rd May' 78

4th, 5th, 6th May

7th May'78

Maligakanda Vidyodaya Pirivena, Colombo

Eheliyagoda

Ratnapura

Pelmadulla, Balangoda

8th to 9th May	Diyatalawa, Bandarawela
9th May,	Nuwera Eliya
10th, 11th, 12th	Nugatalawa
13th May	Badulla
13th, 14th, 15th	Maiyangana
16th May	Batticaloa, Kalmuna, Ampara
17th May	Pottuvil
18th May	Moneragala
19th May	Tissamaharama
20th May	Kirivehera - Kataragama
21st May	Udawalawe, Tangalle, Belliatta
22nd May	Wewurukannala
22nd to 26th May	Devinuwera
26th May	Matara
28th and 29th May	Weligama, Koggala
30th May	Galle
31st May	Balapitiya, Bentara,
1st June	Beruwala Kalutara
2nd June	Horana, Panadura, Moratuwa
3rd to 6th June	Moratuwa, Warakapola
7th June	Kegalle
8th June	Kandy
9th to 12th June	Galagedera
13th	Matale, Dambulla
13th to 14th June	Polonnaruwa
15th June	Kantalai
16th June	Trincomalee
17th June	Kahatagasdigiliya
18th to 19th June	Medawachchi
19th to 24th June	Vavuniya
25th June	Mihintale
26th June	Anuradhapura
27th June	Kekirawa
28th June	Hanguranketa, Moneragala
	Gampola
	Yatiantota

29th June	Ruwanwella, Polgahawala
30th to 1st July	Nurunegala
1st July	Wariyapola
2nd July	Yapahuwa
3rd July	Chilaw, Dummalasooriya, Madampe
4th July	Mudukattuwa, Kirimetiya, Kuliyaipitiya
5th July	Kuliyaipitiya, Dambadeniya
6th July	Pannala, Negombo
7th to 8th	Miniwangoda
8th to 9th July	Diyulapitiya
10th July	Attanagalla, Warana-Rajamaha Vihara, Dompe, Homagama
11th to 13th July	Bellánwila
14th July	Matugama, Bulathsinghala
15th July	Meegahatenne, Elpitiya, Ambalangoda
16th to 17th July	Ambalangoda, Induruwa, Mortuwa
18th to 20th July	Kotte, Kāduwela, Hanwella
21st July	Jaela
22nd to 25th July	Keleniya Raja Maha Vihara and then to the Katunayaka Airport Port to go back to India.

XIII. VISIT TO MONUMENTS

My programme of stay in Sri Lanka for a period of fifteen days was organised by the Archaeological Commissioner of the Government in a very precise manner. Shri M.H. Sirisoma, Assistant Archaeological Commissioner was instructed to frame my detailed day to day programme. For the first seven days I had to stay in Colombo itself for delivering talks at various institutions and organisations in addition to meeting the distinguished personalities. The programme in Colombo was rather very hectic and I could not find any free time to move on my own to see the capital city. It was arranged in such a preoccupied manner that the correspondents of certain newspapers felt disappointed in not being able to extract time for interview. The same was the case with some scholars who wished to discuss the discovery with me. On my own I did not like to disappoint any individual who carried a desire to meet me. I, therefore, obliged them all by fixing up appointments in the early hours of the day at 7.00, when I used to be free before my breakfast. Any programme arranged by the Assistant Commissioner used to start only at 9.00 A.M. One of the correspondents of a newspaper wanted to know my feelings when I discovered the relics. I told the lady correspondent that my joy knew no bounds. The proceedings of the interview were published by Miss Karel Roberts next day (27th March, 1978) in Sunday Observer under the title 'Overjoyed When He Found Relics'. In brief the news printed in bold letters was as follows:-

"Indian archaeologist Krishna Murari Srivastava, to whom we owe the discovery of the Kapilavastu relics now being venerated by millions of

Buddhists in the country, said his joy knew no bounds when he finally released the bone fragments of Gautama Buddha from the tightly packed burnt brick encasements in which the Sakyans had placed them after the cremation at Kushinagar (Kusinara).

"He personally descended 22 feet under ground after clearing a 4x4 foot area for the descent into the lowest chamber, where the burnt brick chambers were visible. If the two English amateur excavators had not taken a wrong turning the Kapilavastu relics might have seen the light of the day in 1898. Mr. Srivastava a Hindu by birth, is convinced, so he said with a smile that hid more than the camera eye could catch, that something more than dead-on accuracy guided him to the relic chamber.

"Mr. Srivastava's interest in Buddhism goes deeper than the surface. He sees the philosophy of Gautama Buddha as the way to salvation. The Buddha has always been a guiding light throughout his life, so it is only natural that his best moments as an excavator have been in places associated with the life of the greatest philosopher the world has ever known.

"Mr. Srivastava, in an exclusive interview said that only a fraction of work has been done on excavations in the centres associated with the life of the Buddha in India. What has to date not been excavated may yield ruins and relics of tremendous importance to archaeologists and historians in the future. The government of his country was keen that further excavations be carried out in these areas in which there was great interest even among the non-Buddhist population of the country. When the Buddha relics were discovered the Indian people in the area were overjoyed and paid the greatest reverence to them. Mr. Srivastava said".

The stay of seven days at Colombo gave me a very good opportunity to know about the country of ancient Sri Lanka in general by paying visit to the National Museum and various other learned institutions. Being an archaeologist and also a member of the Archaeological Survey of India, I had a fascination to gain a first hand knowledge of the most important monuments in the country by visiting them. The Archaeological Commissioner being a member of a similar institution could very well catch my feelings. Hence, a visit to the most important monuments in the country within a period of seven days was very well planned by the Archaeological

Commissioner. Shri M.H. Sirisoma, Assistant Commissioner, was to accompany me during my visit to various monuments.

Before undertaking the trip to the monuments Shri Sirisoma was kind enough to give me a book on the History of Ceylon by Ray Chauniary, so as to develop some familiarity with them. The tour started on the 10th March in the early hours. There is a direct good road from Colombo to Trincomalee. It is a trunk road for visit to all important monuments from Colombo. Shri Sirisoma told me about the programme of stay at Sigiriya on that day after going round the monuments at Dambulla. He was kind enough in giving a general introduction to the monuments on the way so as to generate my interest in them.

When we reached Dambulla I was surprised to observe the close similarity of the caves there with the Buddhist caves in India, both in rock-cut architecture and painting. In all there were five shrines dating back to the times when Buddhism was introduced in the country of Sri Lanka. They remained in oblivion for a long time before they were brought into prominence by King Walagambahu who took refuge in the caves in 104 B.C. after being defeated by the Tamils. He continued to occupy these caves for a period of sixteen years till he was able to regain his throne and return to Anuradhapura.

Religious toleration in ancient times was a rule rather than an exception. It was quite evident from the sculptures of both Vishnu and Buddha at one and the same place at Dambulla. The first cave is known as Deva Raja Vihara, meaning the monastery of the God-King. The term has a direct reference to Vishnu whose image in wood stands very near the head of Buddha. The figure of Vishnu is equally sacred to the people of Sri Lanka.

Modern man has always derived pleasure in spoiling the natural beauty of the ancient monuments. The country of Sri Lanka is not free from such encroachments. But for the first cave, the frontage of all other caves has been covered by a verandah made of burnt bricks. The modern construction besides being an eye sore to the eyes has also rendered the interior of the caves completely dark. The monks, however, take the construction to be a matter of great pride.

After seeing the cave temples of Dambulla we left for Sigiriya.

a is not very far off from Dambulla and in all the distance from
bo to this place via Kurunegala, was 103 miles. We reached Sigiriya
at 2.00 P.M. For the convenience of the visitors the Ceylon Hotels
ration have established a first class Rest House at Sigiriya in the
re of a luxury hotel.

Sigiriya played a very important role in the ancient history of Sri
, though for a very limited period. A very interesting reference to
story of Sigiriya is found in the Mahavamsa. The English translation
reference is as follows:—

"Thereupon the wicked ruler called Kassapa sent forth his groom
s cook. But as he was unable (through these) to slay his brother, he
k himself through fear to Sihagiri which was difficult of ascent for
n beings. He cleared the land about, surrounded it with a wall and
a staircase in the form of a lion. Thence it took its name (of
iri)."

Thus Sigiriya played a short role in being the capital of a parricide
2. The place was completely unknown before the event and in a
ir fashion went into oblivion after the prince abandoned it. The
ical deeds which led to the establishment of the fortified capital at
ya may be recalled for a better understanding of the place.

The king of Anuradhapura, Dhatusena (459-477 A.D.) had two
viz. Kassapa and Moggallana. The latter was born of the anointed
n, whereas the former an off shoot of a wife of low birth. The king had
a charming daughter with whom he was very much attached. He gave
and to his sister's son, named Migara in marriage. The son-in-law was
inted commander of the army. It so happened one day that the king
ed blood-stained garments of his lovely daughter. He came to know
quiry that his son-in-law indulged in a brutal action of whipping her
hter on the thigh, although she had not committed any mistake.
d with wrath the king issued an order to burn the mother of his
in-law (his own sister) to death, in a naked position. The army
mander thereupon resolved to wreak vengeance on the king and for
purpose he entered into a conspiracy with Kassapa. Both of them
ned to organise a *coup d'etat*. Kassapa assumed the kingship after
ing the king a prisoner. Since he was not confident of kingship, he set
1 to purge the loyal people of the king. Finding no way out, the legal
to the throne, Moggallana, left the country for India in order to raise
rmy.

Migara was not fully contented by seeing his father-in-law as a prisoner. He obtained further orders from the king to kill him by impressing that the ex-king was making all efforts to hide all amassed treasure for his son Moggallana. The commander Migara quenched his thirst for vengeance by plastering Dhatusena, naked in a wall.

Kassapa was, somehow or the other, always afraid of Moggallana's return, particularly because of his unsuccessful attempt to assassinate him. He, therefore, took a decision to seek refuge in the inaccessible stronghold of Sigiriya, as described in the Mahavamsa mentioned above.

Kassapa collected treasures and in order to protect them he appointed guards at various places. A majestic palace was also built by Kassapa at Sigiriya on the gneissic outcrop of rock rising to a height of six hundred feet from the surrounding plain. The palace was considered to be another Alakamanda in which the king lived like god Kubera.

As a measure of repentance for his heinous crimes and also to atone them, Kassapa gave patronage to Buddhism at Anuradhapura and established a monastery there. During eighteenth year of his rule he received a message that Moggallana had come back from India and was preparing for a war. With a well organised force Kassapa marched from Sigiriya in all confidence for victory. The stars, however, did not favour him and an unexpected incident turned the tide completely against him. In order to avoid a marshy land Kassapa adopted another route and guided his elephants accordingly. The troops following Kassapa did not catch the strategy and mistook it to be a line of quick retreat. A nervous sensation thereafter spread like a wild fire leading to a complete disorder amongst the troops. The scene of disorder in the army made Kassapa feel that his capture was imminent. He, therefore, killed himself by slashing his throat with his own knife.

Moggallana established himself as a king at Anuradhapura after attending to the last rites of his brother. Instead of keeping Sigiriya under his own control he handed it over to the priests. Sigiriya, thereafter, lost all importance and within a short time it had no place in the memory of the contemporary people.

The monuments of the impregnable fortress of Sigiriya were covered up completely by the rapid growing vegetation in a tropical country.

remained in complete darkness till 19th century and were brought to light by the British explorers and administrators. Major H. Forbes rediscovered Sigiriya in 1831 and visited the place again in 1833.

Two areas on the east and west of the outcrop of rock are enclosed by walls. In all five approaches to the fortified area around Sigiriya have so far been brought to light. The western approach appears to be the main entrance on account of the elaborate nature of its construction: a ramp across the moat, a gateway flanked by guard houses, a movable drawbridge arrangement across the innermost moat and a flight of steps for access to the main city.

Within the city there is an attractive pleasure garden approached by a flight of steps. There are a number of cisterns also in the pleasure garden. They are connected with each other by underground channels. Fountains add further attraction to the pleasure garden.

On the western fringe of the rock outcrop caves having early inscriptions are very interesting. In all there are twenty-three caves but only a few of them bear inscription. The inscription records nothing more than the date in Brahmi characters of 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.

The principal approach to the summit of Sigiriya was through a gallery, made of bricks, with high walls and paved with limestone slabs. The inner surface of the gallery wall has been polished to perfection and on account of this reason it is known in Sinhalese as Mirror Wall.

The paintings at Sigiriya attract the greatest attention of a visitor. The paintings have been executed above the gallery, well protected from sun and shower, to inspire admiration amongst the visitors. The best preserved paintings can be seen in a pocket half way up the rock about 100 feet above the gallery. There is a close similarity between the paintings at Sigiriya and those at Ajanta in India. It was only on this account that the first Archaeological Commissioner, Bell, proclaimed that the artists who executed the paintings at Sigiriya and Ajanta were trained at one and the same school.

The main citadel and the palace of Kassapa can be seen on the top of the summit. The approach to these monuments is with the help of ledges and grooves. While planning the citadel the architects displayed a great ingenuity in making use of all available space on the rock.

The Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka has constructed a site museum also at Sigiriya. It is located in the extensive area between the outer moat and the middle rampart on the western side of Sigiriya. The museum houses building materials, pottery, metal objects and other small finds. Torsos of Buddha, a limestone statue of a queen and guardstones are also exhibited in the museum.

The visit of the monuments at Dambulla and Sigiriya exhausted me completely for the day. At the fall of the day Mr. M.H. Sirisoma took me back to the rest house at Sigiriya, where I spent a comfortable night after dinner. Before dinner, however, I met the Archaeological Commissioner, Mr. Raja De Silva, who happened to be there on an official visit. He made number of enquiries from me on my visit to the monuments during the day.

According to the scheduled programme, we left Sigiriya for Polonnaruwa after a heavy breakfast the next day in the morning. We reached Polonnaruwa via Illukweva by a new road in the afternoon. Arrangements for our stay were made in a first class hotel. We left for the monuments after refreshing ourselves followed by some snacks and tea. The Ceylon or Sri Lanka tea is famous enough.

The first capital of Sri Lanka was at Anuradhapura, which will receive attention in the subsequent pages. In mediaeval times the capital at Anuradhapura was abandoned giving place to a new capital at Polonnaruwa. It is interesting to note that Polonnaruwa was the seat of administration of the Cholas of South India in 993 A.D. following the fall of Anuradhapura. It is only on account of the hold of the Cholas over Polonnaruwa that a considerable number of Saiva and Vaishnava images are found there.

Polonnaruwa played a very important role in the medieval history of Sri Lanka. The place is popularly associated with three kings in Sinhalese history. They are in chronological order Vijayabahu I (1055-1110 A.D.), who had to encounter ... insurmountable difficulties in liberating the country from the clutches of the Cholas; his grandson Parakramabahu I (1153-1186 A.D.), a great hero in the Sinhalese history, who has been honoured in glorious terms by the author of Chulavamsa for having unified the country and undertaken numerous building constructions and

ion works; and Nissamkamalla of Kalinga (1187-1196 A.D.), who is known for his extensive travels in the country, leaving behind a number of inscriptions recording his travels, building activities and rests. But for one or two, all the monuments still existing at Polonnaruwa were erected by either Parakramabahu I or Nissamkamalla.

Polonnaruwa was again subjected to foreign occupation by Kalinga, who captured the city and ruled there for a limited period of fifteen (1215-1230 A.D.). The place was again liberated by Parakramabahu (1232-1293 A.D.), the son of Vijayabahu IV of Dambadeniya. Following the rule of Parakramabahu III, the medieval capital of Polonnaruwa was abandoned completely, allowing a free hand to the thick vegetation of the island country to cover up the magnificent buildings, parks and gardens of the place.

With the establishment of the British rule over the island, explorations were undertaken to locate the ruins of Polonnaruwa, which were lost in the jungle. It goes to the credit of Lt. Fagan who ultimately brought them to light again in 1820. The place was known at that time by the name of Polonnaruwa and the large irrigation reservoir there was called Topaweve (the tank) and the thupa or dagoba on account of the fact that a dagoba existed within the boundaries of the tank.

The 12th century author of Chulvamsa called the capital of his time Polonnaruwa (city of Pulatthi or Pulasti), though the earlier name of Polonnaruwa in contemporary inscriptions was Pulanari. During the rule of the Vijayanagara kings at Anuradhapura the place was known as Kandavurunuvana (city), where they could take refuge when attacked by the rulers of South India. The place also played the part of a buffer for resisting invasions from the southern territory of Rohana.

Monuments

Not very far from the hotel, where accommodation for us was provided, is Potgul Vehera, "the monastery containing a library". The location of the monastery is in four terraces, the lower two being in the form of ambulatories round the upper terraces. I was informed by a local guide that according to an inscribed door-jamb the monuments were constructed by Parakramabahu I and rebuilt and repaired by his two

ueens Lilavati and Chandravati. The inscribed door-jambis now lying in the Anuradhapura Museum.

Beyond the monastery, there is a large rock-cut statue on the northern side, measuring 11 ft. 6 inches, which is considered to be one of the masterpieces of the island. The identity of the statue has not so far been decided. According to one line of thought the statue represents the king Parakramabahu I, whereas others feel that it is of a Brahmanical age.

On the eastern side of the rubble-lined embankment of the reservoir, a number of ponds and baths can be observed. They are all fed and connected by underground drains, sluices and aqueducts. Most of the baths and ponds can be attributed to Nissamkamalla.

Not very far on the north-east, the remains of an audience hall can be observed. The purpose of the building is made evident by the bases of two rows of pillar, which must have supported the roof.

The Council Chamber of king Nissamkamalla (1187-1196 A.D.), located on the northern side of the audience hall is very impressive. There is a colossal lion throne within the council chamber. The inscription on the throne records that it served as the seat of the king.

A monument popularly known as the Island Pavilion is located on the western side of the Council Chamber. The citadel wall is not far from this monument and has been connected by a tarred road. The entrance porch of the northern gate of the citadel is of great importance on account of the inscription of Nissamkamalla recording the qualities, charitable acts and exploits of the king.

In the south-western corner of this area of the citadel a beautiful palace, square in plan, can be viewed. The central structure of the palace now rises up to three storeys. A spacious hall in the palace is supported on 36 pillars.

Proceeding northwards from the north gate of the citadel a visitor, particularly an Indian, comes across a shrine dedicated to Siva on the western side of the gravel road. The shrine is built of stone. The architectural features of the temple are similar to a temple of South Indian style constructed in 12th century A.D.

In a quadrangle on the northern side of the temple of Siva, there are temples of the Polonnaruwa period representing the Tooth of Buddha. In the south-western corner of the quadrangle there is a monument known as image house. The sanctum of the image house contains the image of Buddha in a seated position.

A circular relic-shrine well known as *Vatadage* is located in the eastern corner of the quadrangle. It is a dagoba within a circular enclosure. Four statues of Buddha, one in each cardinal direction, grace the entrance at the four entrances to the upper terrace. A stone slab of the enclosure carries an inscription recording that this shrine was constructed by Nissamkamalla.

A stepped-pyramid-like structure stands at the north-eastern corner of the upper terrace. Since the building is in seven tiers it is famous by the name *mahal Prasadaya*, meaning the edifice in seven storeys.

Close to the seven-storeyed structure on the south-western side, there is a stone slab struck by a massive rectangular slab inscription known as the 'stone book' i.e. the 'stone book'. It was impressed upon me by Mr. Sirisoma that the inscription was the largest in the country of Sri Lanka. The eastern and southern vertical faces of the stone slab are graced by the decoration of Gaja-Lakshmi.

Within the fortified area located on the western side of the Galpota enclosure (the stone book), one can see the Tooth Relic Temple of Nissamkamalla, early known in Sinhalese as *Hatadage*. The term means either the 'House of the sixty relics' or the 'House built in sixty days', the latter signifying a greater acceptance in the country.

The Tooth Relic Temple of Vijayabahu I, which was built by his father, King Mahadeva, stands to the west of *Hatadage*. The statue of Buddha was placed on the ground floor of both these shrines, the upper floor containing the tooth relic of the monarch.

The religious bent of mind of the king Nissamkamalla is displayed in the inscription on the lower part of the pillars of the monument known as *makalata-mandapa* (Nissamka's flower scroll hall).

While leaving the quadrangle through the eastern gate and proceeding in a northern direction I came across the monument Pabalura. It is a truncated dagoba of modest proportions. The monument is

believed to have been built by Rupavati, a queen of Parakrambahu I. Erection of numerous image houses around the circular base of the monument was a characteristic feature of the 12th century dagobas.

The earliest monument of Polonnaruwa assignable to the period of Chola rule is spotted further east of the dagoba. It is a Siva temple numbered as Siva Devale no. 2.

Taking a turn to the north and marching back on the ancient road, the visitor comes across the remains of three Hindu Temples, just before the north gate of the city. Of the three, the best preserved shrine is dedicated to Vishnu. The other two shrines on the western side of the road are dedicated to Siva and his son Ganesh.

Beautiful terracotta plaques can be viewed at the base of the dagoba, famous by the name of Menik Vehera. The plaques represent squatting figures of lion. There is another Siva temple at a short distance further to the north, when one takes up the gravel road again.

Rankot Vehera is the largest complete dagoba in Polonnaruwa. Originally called as *Ruvanvali* dagoba (Golden sand dagoba), it is located towards the north of the temple of Siva. The monument is majestic. The word Rankot Vehera means Golden-spired dagoba. All around the dagoba there are numerous images of Buddha interspersed with flower altars.

Proceeding north from the Rankot Vehera I was taken round the rock-cut cave temples of Polonnaruwa. These temples represented the earliest occupied site at the place. One of the rock surfaces carries an inscription in Brahmi characters of the 5th century A.D. and one of the caves houses two Buddha images. The cave temples are known as Gopalapabhata (the hill of the cowherds).

In the group of Alahana-parivena (monastery associated with a cremation ground), Mr. Sirisoma took me to three important monuments named as *Buddhasima-Pasada* (chapter house within the premises for the acts of the priesthood), the Lankatilaka image house and the dagoba known as Kirivehera.

The sculptures housed in the monastery of Galvihara (rock-cut temple) exhibit glimpses of the influence of Tantric Buddhism. Though

temple is called a cave-temple, it is actually the image of seated Iha which is rock-cut. Buddha has been shown as sitting in

In addition to those described above, there are some more monuments in the form of pavilions and Hindu shrines within the Polonnaruwa plex. Of special interest is a shrine with the statue of *Mahisasuradini*.

There is a site museum also at Polonnaruwa.

After visiting the important monuments at Polonnaruwa during my there for two days we left for Anuradhapura, the first capital of Sri Lanka. According to traditional accounts the history of Anuradhapura a very early beginning, but so far as authenticity is concerned, we can only consider Devanampiya Tissa, a late contemporary of the great emperor Asoka of India who ruled from 272 to 232 B.C. as the first king. The great king of India abandoned war and set upon the path of religious quest by sending missionaries to spread the great religion of Buddhism. One amongst the missionaries was his own son Mahinda who undertook a trip to Sri Lanka. When he reached Sri Lanka the coronation of Devanampiya Tissa was being celebrated with great éclat. The ceremonies of the coronation included a hunting expedition by the king. While the king was on his hunting trip at the hill, known at a later date as Mihintale, he happened to meet the great missionary, the son of king Asoka. Mihintale is about 12 kms. from Anuradhapura. The impact of the missionary Mahinda was so deep on the king Devanampiya Tissa that he spent no time in embracing the religion of Buddhism. The subjects of the king also followed and a large number of them hastened to accept Buddhism as their religion. The occurrence of this event is placed eighteen years after the coronation of Asoka and 236 years after the death of Buddha. If the reckoning of Buddha's death in 483 B.C. is taken to be correct, the event at Mihintale must have taken place in 247 B.C. Displaying his devotion to the religion of Buddhism, Devanampiya Tissa dedicated to the priest-hood the Nandana and Mahamegha royal pleasure gardens situated to the south of the city. In addition, he constructed a Mahavihara which continued to be the centre of religious activities for several centuries. Commemorating the memories of his meeting with the missionary, the king erected a Vihara on the Mihintale hill as well, where the bed of Mahinda can still be seen.

We reached Anuradhapura by the time of lunch. Arrangements for our stay were made in the best hotel at Anuradhapura. Mr. M.H. Sirisoma told me about the trip to Mihintale hill planned in the afternoon. Mihintale is considered to be a pre-eminent centre for visit by Buddhist pilgrims on account of being the place which gave birth to Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Although Mihintale is famous enough for being the meeting place of the missionary Mahinda and the king Devanampiya Tissa, the bones of the missionary enshrined on the hill make it far more sacred to the Buddhists. The large number of steps a visitor has to climb to reach the summit of the hill make the trip very exhausting. In fact if any tourist is desirous of seeing all the monuments on the hillock, he must stay on the top for a night and spend the whole next day for going round. According to the programme framed by Mr. Sirisoma I had only one afternoon for the purpose and as such I could not see the monuments in detail. Mr. Sirisoma, however, made an attempt to show me the most important remains, which constituted mainly stupas and monasteries, in addition to some caves.

The picturesque surroundings of Ambastale *stupa* were very charming. The *stupa* contains the relics of Mahinda, who died in 259 B.C. On the top of the Mihintale Kanda the bold round outlines of Maha Seya *stupa* could be seen. The Buddhist bhikshus who went to Sri Lanka in the ancient days lived in caves. Some of these caves are located on the Mihintale hill as well. The other monuments which I could see on the hill were 'Mahinda's Bed' and ancient 'stone baths'. With the extremely limited time spent on the Mihintale hill I was not satisfied, but there was no way out.

Besides reading on the monuments of Anuradhapura, I had also heard a lot about them from the people of Sri Lanka. I was, therefore, impatient to have a glimpse of the rich heritage of Anuradhapura. We spent a quiet night in the hotel after a sumptuous dinner.

The next morning when we went round the remains of Anuradhapura I observed that a very large area still remains to be cleared or brought to light. The limits of the ancient capital of Anuradhapura must have been very extensive. As a matter of fact it is high time that excavation on a very large scale is undertaken by any international organisation to reveal the extensive buried ruins of Anuradhapura.

The ancient capital of Anuradhapura is studded with a large number of stupas and monasteries. There are a good number of caves as well, many of which carry important inscriptions in Brahmi script. The letters were similar to those used in India. There were five important stupas of the period at Anuradhapura. The first to be built was the small but famous Thuparama. The two stupas which were erected subsequently were the Abhisaya and the Ruvanvalisaya or the Mahastupa. The last two of these stupas were much larger in size than the Mahastupa. They were the Jagiri and Jetavana. Jetavana was the largest in size. The stupas of the later Anuradhapura period were much smaller in proportion. One of the most characteristic features of the massive stupas was the frontispiece which projected from the base. It carried ornamented sculptures in contrast to the stark simplicity of the lines of the stupas. The best examples of the frontispiece can be seen in the stupa of Jetavana and the Jagiri. Amongst the architectural features of the later Anuradhapura period the vatadage stands out to be of great importance. It is a circular enclosure enclosing a small stupa. The largest of the vatadage is the Thuparama at Anuradhapura. It has four circles of stone pillars enclosing the stupa. The remains of Lovamahapaya or the Brazen Palace are unique and interesting amongst the monuments at Anuradhapura. It is believed that the palace had nine storeys and the bhikkhus were provided with accommodation on the basis of rank, the uppermost floors reserved for the senior and presumably the most revered.

Since the stay at Anuradhapura was very short and restricted to two days, the visit to all the important monuments was rather hectic, though satisfactory enough. The next place in our itinerary was Kandy, which was the seat of an empire between sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Built on several terraces the city of Kandy is indeed very lovely. I liked Kandy more than Colombo itself. Arrangements for our stay in Kandy were made in a palatial hotel. We reached Kandy at the fall of the day. After having a good dinner we passed a very comfortable night. Next morning we visited the local museum in the first instance.

The monuments of greatest importance at Kandy is the Temple of the Tooth which was attached to the ancient palace of the king. The oldest of the temples in Kandy, as old as the town itself, is the *Natha devale* built by Narendrasimha (1707-1739 A.D.), who also constructed the present

temple of the Tooth. Of the two major Buddhist viharas in Kandy, Malvatta was built by Kirti Sri Rajasimha (1747-1782 A.D.). The king was also responsible for the construction of two temples in the outskirts of Kandy viz. Gangarama and Degaldoruva, the latter well known for its beautiful frescoes. The construction of the audience hall in Kandy was initiated in 1784 A.D. by Rajadhi Rajasimha (1782-1798 A.D.) and completed in the following century by Sri Vikrama Rajasimha (1798-1815 A.D.). The latter king constructed the decorated lake also in the heart of the city.

One of the most interesting features of Kandyan architecture was a long verandah supported on pillars of wood, stone or masonry. The peaked roof of such structures rose one above the other with the walls protected from the heavy monsoons by overhanging eaves. One of the distinctive contribution of Kandyan Kingdom to architecture was the special type of image-house built on piles. Buddhist temples of this period generally had a residence for the monks, an image house, and a *stupa*. Some of the temples were without a *stupa*. Attached to almost every temple was a shrine dedicated to a Hindu deity, and often an image of the Hindu god was housed under the same roof as the statue of the Buddha.

There was an overall decline in the art of the Kandyan Kingdom. The sculptures were intrinsically imitative. Though they appear to be similar to those from the earlier periods, a close study reveals the decline in artistic standards very easily. The low standards of art are quite apparent in the moonstones. It appears that the connecting links with the artistic traditions of the past were completely lost.

The sojourn to the most important monuments and places in Sri Lanka within a limited number of days was a memorable event. I reached back Colombo from Kandy and after a day's halt there left back for my country with sweet memories of my stay in Sri Lanka. A warm send off was given to me at the Colombo airport.

XIV. EPILOGUE

In the face of such decisive evidences like the relics and the caskets, a good number of scholars, largely from Nepal, have not only indulged in false language, but have questioned the identification of Kapilavastu on the basis of sealings. It is quite natural for the scholars from Nepal to be agitated when the said age-old existence of Kapilavastu was established in another country, a friendly neighbour. The facts, however, must not be ignored and interlinked with the boundaries of a particular country. Further, the line of demarcation between India and Nepal has its origin in the British rule and did not exist during the times of Buddha and his father Siddhodana. A set of important objections raised by those scholars in an indignant manner followed by the answer of the author are furnished below for the benefit and better understanding of the scholars and the world.

Q. No. 1. Adequate evidence is not available to establish beyond doubt that the *stupa* at Piprahwa is the *Nirvana stupa*. Is it not just possible that the inscribed relic casket found by Peppé and the caskets found by the author are contemporaneous?¹

Ans. No. 1. The archaeological evidence is adequate enough to establish beyond doubt that the *stupa* at Piprahwa is the *Nirvana stupa*. The inscription on the relic casket found by Peppé in 1898 contained in the massive sandstone coffer clearly speaks that the *stupa* is the same which

¹ Tilaurakot, the ancient city of KAPILAVASTU, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee (2520) Kathmandu, Shree Gha, Nepal, 1975, p. 2

erected by the Sakyas after the cremation of Buddha over their share of the corporeal relics. The sealings and a lid of a pot, with the legend Kapilavastu, corroborate it further. Even if it is taken for granted that the inscribed relic casket found by Peppé and the original casket found during the course of excavation by the author are contemporaneous, it does not stand in any way of the *stupa* being the *Nirvana stupa*. The archaeologists will have to reconsider in that case the date of the inscription to reconcile it with the date of the death of Buddha. The schematic section of the *stupa* will make it clear how the author claims that the casket found by him are earlier than those found by Peppé in 1898. The working levels of the earlier structures and the *pradakshinapath* and the later ones are different. Any *pradakshinapath* will not be below the working level of a *stupa*. Added to all these is the shape of the circular pipe, which turned into a rectangle at the bottom of the massive sandstone box found by Peppé. The rectangle turned again into a circular shape and continued right upto the bottom most course of the *stupa*. Had there not been two different phases the shape of the pipe would not have changed.

Q. No. 2. According to J.F. Fleet the inscribed casket found by Peppé contained the relics of his Kinsmen, slaughtered by Vidudabha, and not of Buddha.¹

Ans. No. 2. The interpretation given by J.F. Fleet corroborates that Piprahwa is Kapilavastu. Fleet tried to impress by his revised interpretation that each individual object in the massive coffer was meant to venerate each Sakya killed by Vidudabha. If the statement of Fleet is accepted, it will lead to the same conclusion that Piprahwa was Kapilavastu and not Tilaurakot. After all, the Sakyas were massacred at Kapilavastu before the death of Buddha. Fleet, therefore, was responsible for a great confusion by his revised interpretation. The problem of the reconciliation of the date of the inscription with a date earlier than the death of Buddha continued to puzzle the mind of the scholars.

Q. No. 3. The terracotta sealings with a legend belonging to six or seven centuries subsequent to Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha are not decisive evidence in the determination of the identity of a place.²

¹ Tilaurakot, the ancient city of KAPILAVASTU, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee (2520) Kathmandu, Shree Gha, Nepal, 1976, p. 3

² *Ibid*, p. 4

Ans. No. 3. According to the consensus of the scholars there was no during the time of Buddha or his father and as such inscriptions in the legend Kapilavastu of that period should not be expected. It must be impressed upon the scholars that so far not a single site has proved to be other than the place mentioned in the inscription at the site. Inscriptions in all cases were of a much later date, several centuries later, than the first occupation of the site.

Q. No. 4. There is no fortification wall and moat at Piprahwa, as the same can be observed at Tilaurakot.¹

Ans. No. 4. Besides keeping in view the fact that the religious events played a vital role in making Siddhodana a great king, it must be reiterated that fortifications of such an early date as seventh-sixth centuries B.C. are not known. The fortification at Tilaurakot also does not date to that date, but a much later period. Similar is the case of the Joshi remarking aptly has said, "Thus in his opinion, a fortification is an essential feature of an urban settlement, but, as a result of archaeological excavations, we now know definitely that many early Indian cities of great significance e.g. Taxila, Sravasti, Vaisali or Ahichchhatra were without fortifications in the sixth-fifth century B.C."²

Q. No. 5. The distance and direction from Lumbini, the known birthplace of Buddha, the location of Tilaurakot from the site of previous Buddha, the location of Buddhist stupas and memorials within and around Tilaurakot and the archaeological evidence found in the course of explorations conducted by Sukherji favour the identification of Tilaurakot with Kapilavastu.³

Ans. No. 5. The distance and direction of Piprahwa from Lumbini is the same as recorded by Fa-hien who went straight from Kapilavastu to Lumbini. The distance of Tilaurakot from the sites associated with previous Buddhas does not agree with those recorded by the Chinese as Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang. The site of the birth-place of Krakuchanda Buddha is still not known. So far as birth-place of Kanakamuni

Tilaurakot, the ancient city of KAPILAVASTU, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee (2520) Kathmandu, Shree Gha, Nepal, 1976, p. 5

C. Joshi, Early Historical Urban Growth in India: Some Observations, Puratan, No. 7, 1974, Bulletin of the Indian Archaeological Society, New Delhi, p. 90
Tilaurakot op. cit. p. 5

s concerned, it may be recorded that the pillar at Niglihawa (Nigali Sagar) is not *in situ*. There is no trace of *stupa* at the place. P.C. Mukherji had remarked without the least doubt, "The pillar is not *in situ*; for Dr. Fuhrer was mistaken in saying so. When Major Waddell excavated below, the broken bottom was exposed, where no foundation or basement was discovered. Nor could I find the *stupa* of Konagamana, which according to the Doctor's statement was at a short distance from the western embankment".¹ The account of T. Watters is also very significant in this connection. He says, "On the pillar recently discovered in the Nepalese Tarai, near Nigliva, is an inscription in which king Asoka records that he had twice enlarged the tope of Kanakmuni and offered it worship. This information is interesting, but it does not tell us which of the great events in the Buddha's career the tope commemorated".² Watters noted further that, "He (Hiuen Tsang) represents the inscriptions on the pillars as giving particulars of the decease of the two Buddhas, but the inscription on the Nigliva pillar does not give such particulars".³

So far as the archaeological evidence found by P.C. Mukherji in support of Tilaurakot being Kapilavastu is concerned, it may be mentioned that he was not able to present any tangible evidence to uphold his contention. Dr. (Mrs.) D. Mitra has also observed the same point independently. She says, "It may be remarked that Mukherji did not mention any movable antiquities from Tilaurakot specifically Buddhist. There is also no justification for regarding the structures exposed by him, except the one outside the eastern gate of the fortified mound at Tilaurakot, as Buddhist monasteries and *stupa*. The so-called sixteen-sided *stupa* with an attached portico was evidently a late temple of unknown affiliation".⁴

Q. No. 6. Indeed the grandeur of the city-complex unearthed in Tilaurakot should confirm the aptness of the place to be called Maha-Kapilavastu in days of yore.⁵

1. P.C. Mukherji, *Antiquities of Kapilavastu, Tarai of Nepal*, 1899 (Reprinted Varanasi, 1972), p. 30

2. T. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India 625-645 A.D.* Delhi 1961, Vol. II, p. 7

3. *Ibid.*

4. Deoala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments* (Calcutta 1972), p. 252

5. Tilaurakot, the ancient city of KAPILAVASTU, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee (2520) Kathmandu, Shree Gha, Nepal, 1976, p. 6

Ans. No. 6. The scholars have all along been clamouring that Tilaurakot was Kapilavastu, but now with the above statement it is added that Tilaurakot was Maha-Kapilavastu. It appears that the scholar making the above statement wants to convey indirectly that the sealings of the legend Maha-Kapilavastu found at Piprahwa were transported to Tilaurakot. If so, he will have to present convincing evidence for it, not a single sealing with the legend Maha-Kapilavastu from Tilaurakot.

Q. No. 7. The city of ancient Kapilavastu was said to be situated on the bank of a river. The present Banganga river is ancient Bhagirathi and it flowed by the side of Kapilavastu.¹

Ans. No. 7. The location of Kapilavastu on the bank of a river is not mentioned in any of the earlier Buddhist texts. The reference is always to a dispute, between Sakyas and Koliyans, over the waters of the river Rapti, which served as a boundary dividing the states of the two communities. In addition, the grounds on which Bhagirathi has been associated with the Banganga river require adequate justification. There is a rivulet by the name of Siswa near Piprahwa and two lakes viz. Siswa and Majhau. Kapilavastu is said to have been situated on the side of a lake. While talking of Kapila *rishi* after whom Kapilavastu was named Malalasekera says "When the sons of Okkaka went into voluntary exile and looking for a place on which to found a city, they came upon Kapila in his hermitage in the forest by the side of a lake".² In addition to all these facts, the Chinese pilgrims do not speak of any river by the side of Kapilavastu. The position of the river Rapti as described in Buddhist texts in relation to Kapilavastu corresponds entirely with Piprahwa. According to the texts the Sakya state was bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the east by the river Rohini and on the west and south by the Rapti. The location of Tilaurakot does not correspond with the above details.

Q. No. 8. Piprahwa does not reveal a single sherd of Painted Grey Ware and as such the beginnings based on the relic caskets cannot be traced to Tilaurakot, the ancient city of KAPILAVASTU, Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee (2520) Kathmandu, Shree Gha, Nepal, 1976, p. 6

Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, London 1937, Vol. I, p. 514

ushed back to eighth-century B.C.¹

Ans. No. 8. The excavators of Tilaurakot appear to be totally ignorant that the *stupa* at Piprahwa was constructed only after the death of Buddha and *stupa* is not clubbed together with the premises of a township. They are further unaware that the Painted Grey Ware found at Tilaurakot is not the genuine Painted Grey Ware occurring at the sites in Indo-Gangetic basin. Again, the type of Painted Grey Ware encountered at Tilaurakot is very well present at Ganwaria, the town site of Kapilavastu. In fact the earliest occupation at Ganwaria is represented by black polished ware; fine grey ware; red ware vases and dishes with reddish rim, blackish bottom and greyish exterior; red ware bowls and dishes with a mirror-like polish occasionally painted in black dots and circles.

Q. No. 9. The excavation at Tilaurakot has just begun and no one just at present can say how long it will take to complete it.²

Ans. No. 9. On the one hand, it is claimed that excavations at Tilaurakot are being conducted since decades establishing thereby, on the basis of rich antiquities, that it was Kapilavastu, and on the other it is said that the excavation at Tilaurakot has just begun. The scholars will have to decide as to which of the two statements is correct, particularly because one of the scholars from Nepal lamented and said, "Now the excavated materials, charts, photographs etc., of several years, as these got burnt in the fire of Singhadarbar that smeared it, we cannot say to the world about what antiquities did we possess till recently as to the glorification aspect of the site of Tilaurakot".³ As a matter of fact the long standing claims of Tilaurakot being Kapilavastu should have been established by illustrated reports before the antiquities were engulfed in fire in place of hammering over it, particularly after the discoveries at Piprahwa and Ganwaria. The question of Tilaurakot being the site of ancient Kapilavastu can receive any consideration only after any tangible evidence in the form of inscription is brought to light by the excavation at Tilaurakot just begun. It is ridiculous to wait for the identification of Kapilavastu till the final word on the completion of excavation at Tilaurakot is received, particularly in the

1. Ram Niwas Pandey, Why Tilaurakot is Kapilavastu? Journal of History Instruction Committee, Kirtipur Campus with Kapilavastu Supplement, Voice History Vol. II, Annual 1976, Kirtipur, Nepal, p. 103

2. Bhuwan Lal Pradhan, Journal of History Instruction Committee, Kirtipur Campus with Kapilavastu supplement, Voice of History Vol. II, Annual 1976, Kirtipur, Nepal, p. 114

3. Ram Niwas Pandey, op. cit. p. 107

sence of concrete evidences from Piprahwa and Ganwaria.

Q. No. 10. Annals of Buddhism abound with reference to the truction of Kapilavastu by Vidudabha and the subsequent flight of the yas. After this event a new Kapilavastu was founded, which may be rahwa.¹

Ans. No. 10. It has not been recorded in any text that Kapilavastu , completely destroyed and all the Sakyas were massacred. P.C. kerji's observation is very clear on this issue. He said, "That Kapila- tu was not, however, altogether, destroyed, is proved by the fact, that giving of garments to needy brethren, the prohibition against the iring of ornaments by the Bhikshunis (nuns), and the permission to ain boys at seven years of age, are all referred to the state of affairs at pilavastu immediately after its destruction by Vidudabha. And many kshus seem to have been left uninjured. When the Buddha died at shinagara in Anjana era 148=543 B.C., the Sakyas with an army went re to claim a share of his relics. They brought one eighth of the ddha's *sariras* and erected a *stupa* over it"² Even if the destruction of pilavastu by Vidudabha, the source of which is only a Jataka story, is ieved, it has not been mentioned anywhere that after the massacre of Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the foundation of a new city were laid. Further, occupational debris at Tilaurakot speaks that the place continued to be ourishing centre right from eighth century B.C. to fourth century A.D. ould there be no sign of the destruction of the place? In addition, the continued to be prosperous till fourth century A.D. instead of being erted after destruction. When the occupation at the original Kapila- tu continued to exist, the inhabitants being Sakyas had every claim for are of the corporeal relics of Buddha.

In conclusion the following extract of the Presidential Address ivered by the most eminent epigraphist D.C. Sircar before the August ly of historians at the forty-first session of Indian History Congress at mbay in 1980 will be of great interest to the scholars:

"Similar has been the case with the location of the city of Kapila- tu, the capital of the Sakya people. Its name has, even from ancient es, been often wrongly written as 'Kapilavastu' due to wrong Sanskriti- Tilaurakot, the ancient city of Kapilavastu, op. cit. p. 10

²C. Mukherji, op. cit. p. 13

ion of Pali—prakrit 'Kapilavatthu', Pali-Prakrit *vatthu* standing for the Sanskrit words *vastu* (an object) and *vastu* (a habitation). Every evidence was inadequate for the definite location of the Sakya / so that some scholars were of the opinion that it stood at the site of modern Tilaurakot in the Nepalese Tarai while another group of them preferred to locate it at the village of Piprahwa lying in the same neighbourhood but falling in the Basti District of Uttar Pradesh in India, actually in the northern fringe of the District, immediately to the south of the Nepalese border. Excavations were recently carried out at both Tilaurakot in Nepal and Piprahwa in India by the officers of the Archaeological Survey of India: but Tilaurakot yielded no antiquity offering evidence on the point whereas more than forty seals belonging to the *Kapilava (vaa) stu-bhikshu-sangha* (community of Buddhist monks of Kapilavastu) living in the Devaputra-vihara which seems to have been a monastery named after the Kushana King Kanishka (c. 78-102 A.D.) often called 'Devaputra' have been unearthed at Piprahwa. Thus the evidence in favour of Piprahwa as the site of Kapilavastu seems to be conclusive; but it has naturally failed to satisfy the Nepalese who feel that their country is being deprived, by the Indian archaeological excavators, of the honour of being the homeland of the Buddha, and a suggestion has even been offered that the matter may be left up to the UNESCO for decision whether Kapilavastu should be identified with Piprahwa in India or Tilaurakot in Nepal. A funny idea indeed".

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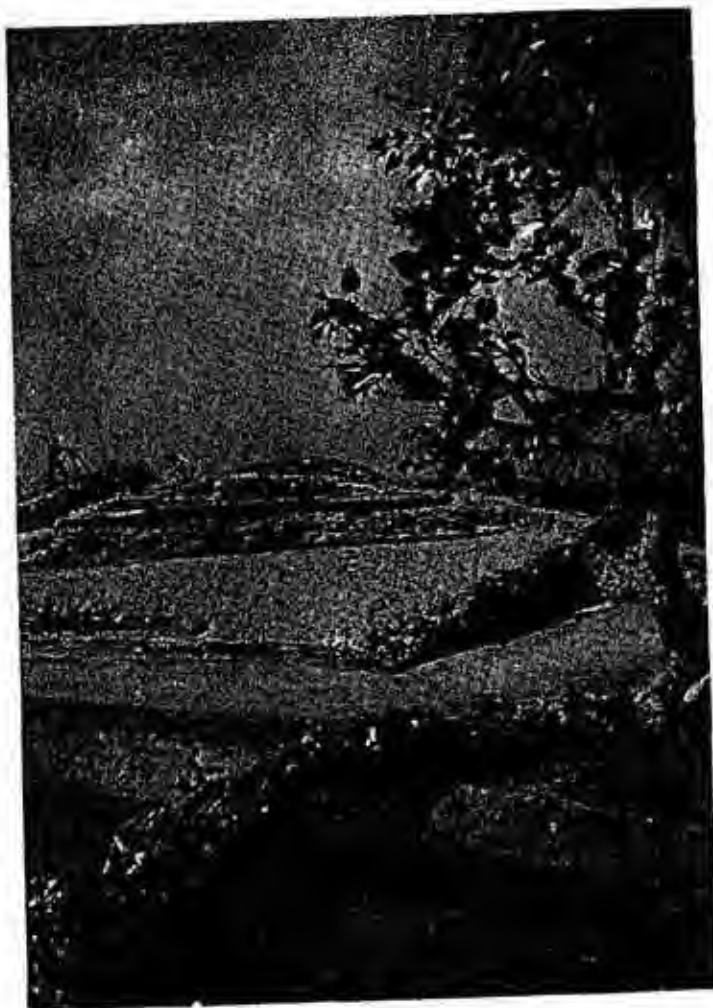


1. Piprahwa : inscribed casket found in 1898

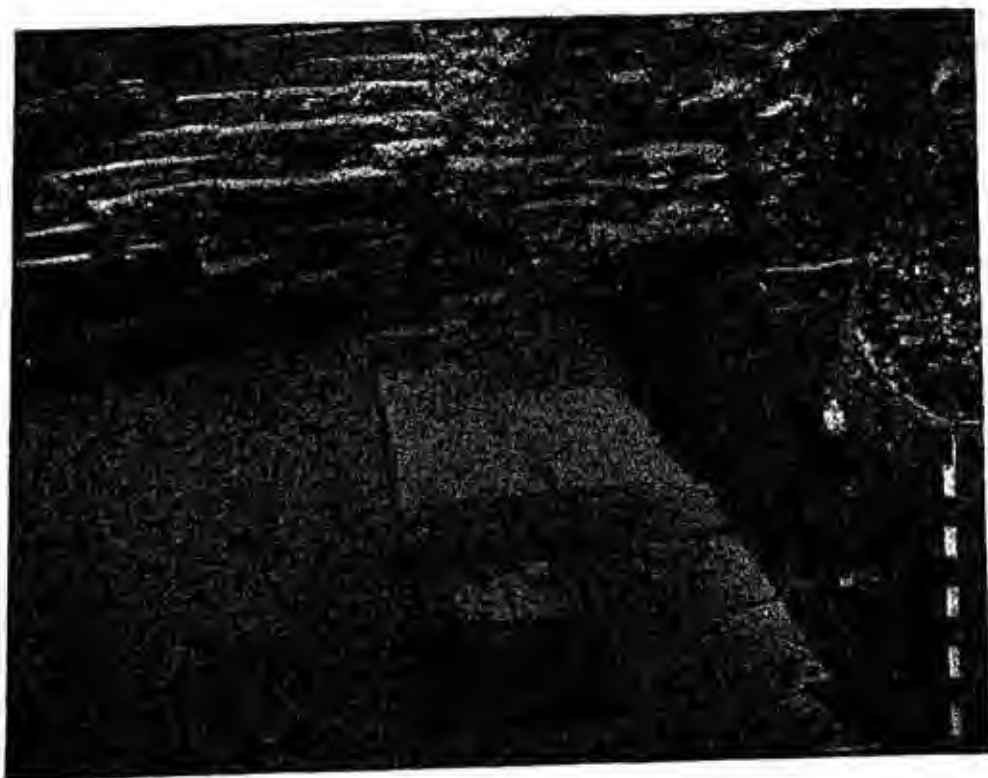




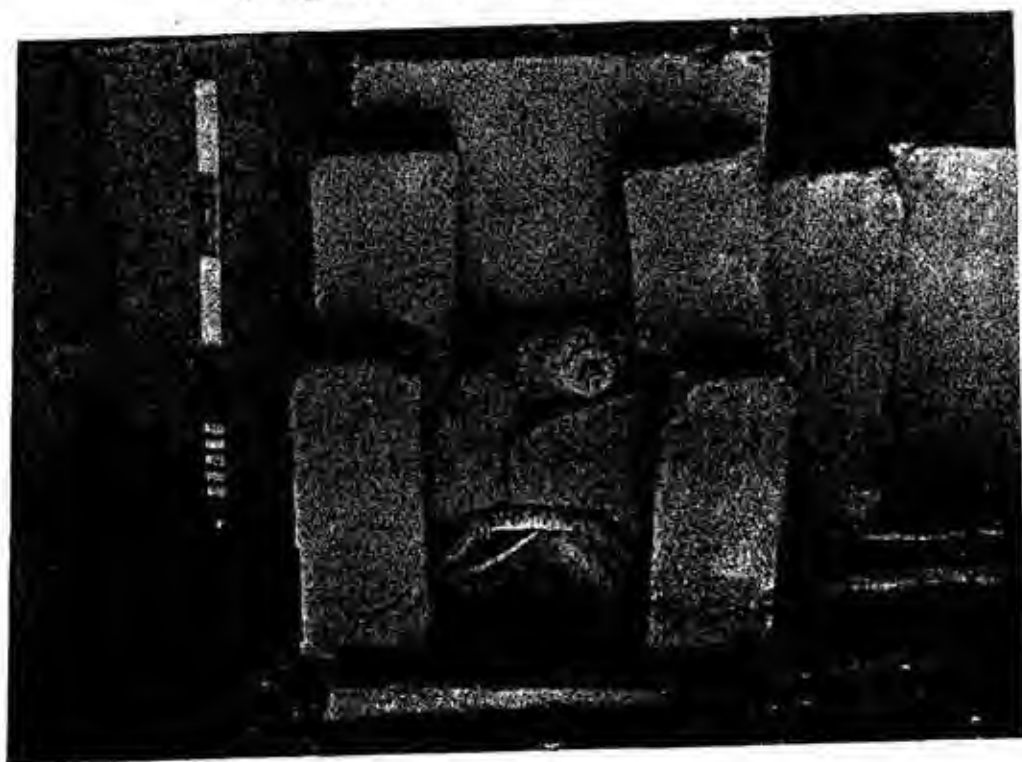
2. Piprahwa : general view of the stupa before excavation



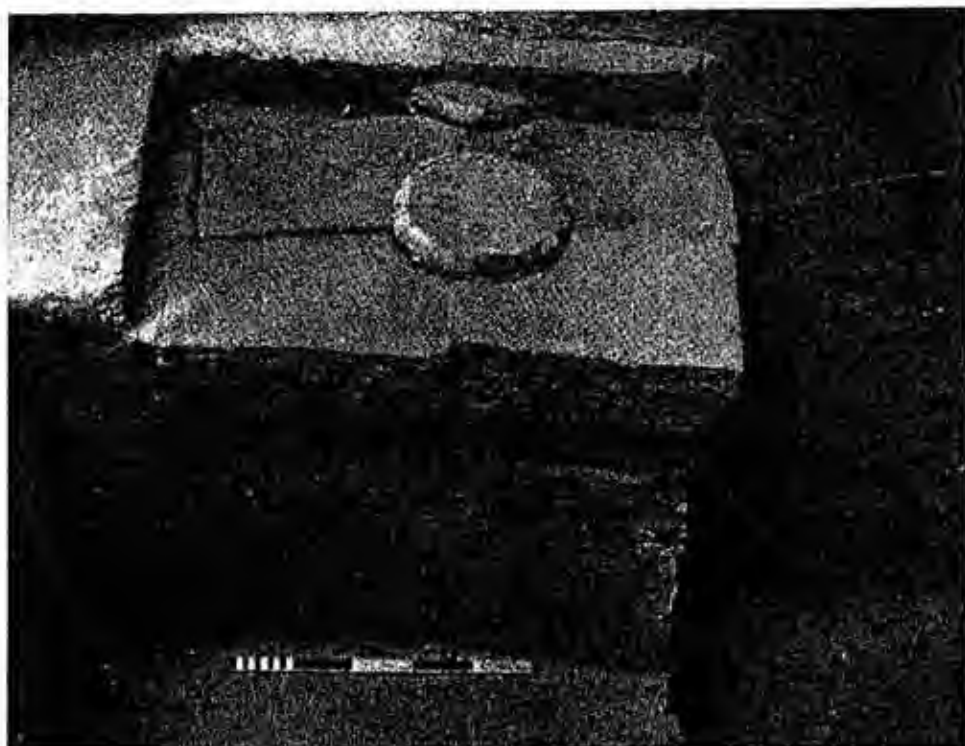
3. Piprahwa : general view of the stupa after excavation



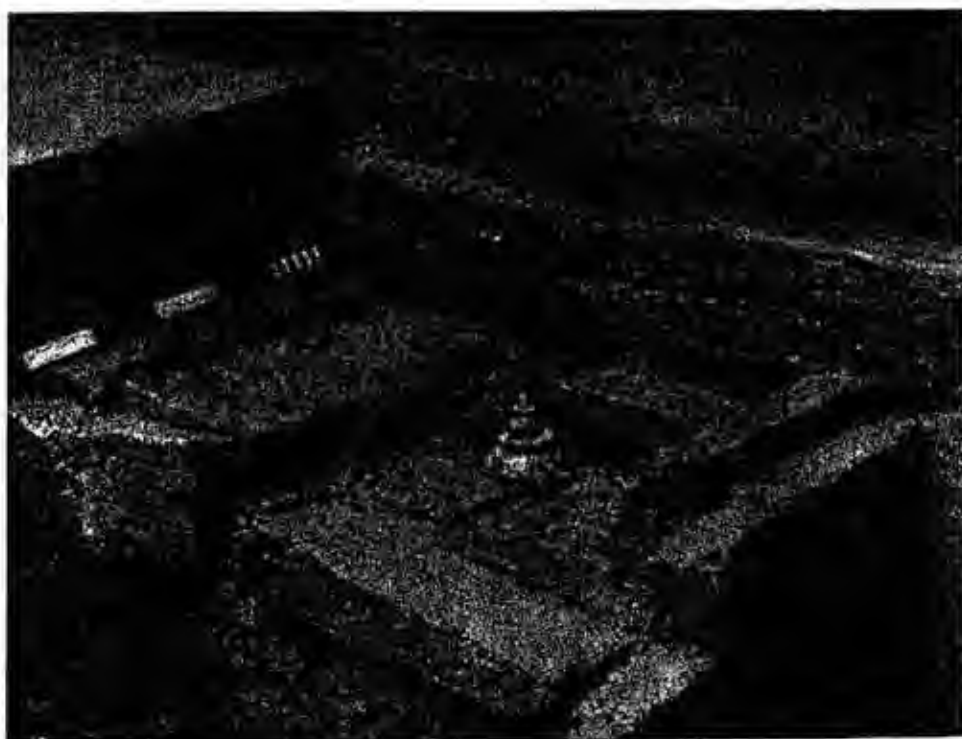
4. Piprahwa : two burnt-brick chambers



5. Piprahwa : casket and dish in the northern brick chamber



6. Piprahwa : two dishes in the southern brick chamber



7. Piprahwa : casket in the southern brick chamber



8. Piprahwa : casket found in the northern brick chamber



9. Piprahwa : casket found in the southern chamber



10. Piprahwa : eastern monastery



11. Piprahwa : terracotta sealings with the legend Kapila vastu



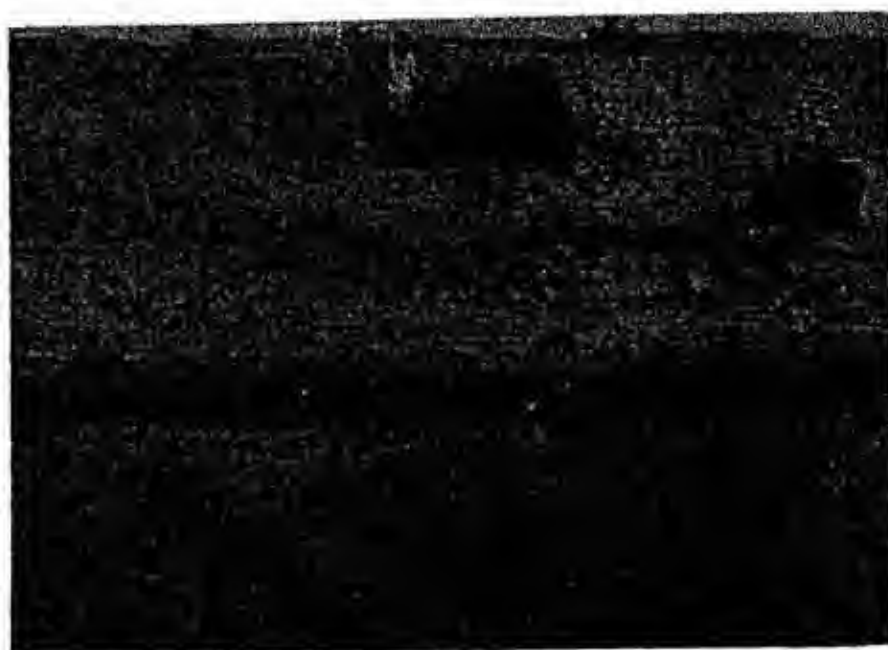
12. Ganwaria : larger Structural complex



13. Ganwaria : ring well in larger structural complex



14. Ganwaria : mud wall



15. Ganwaria : smaller structural complex



16. Ganwaria : smaller structural complex, entrance on the north



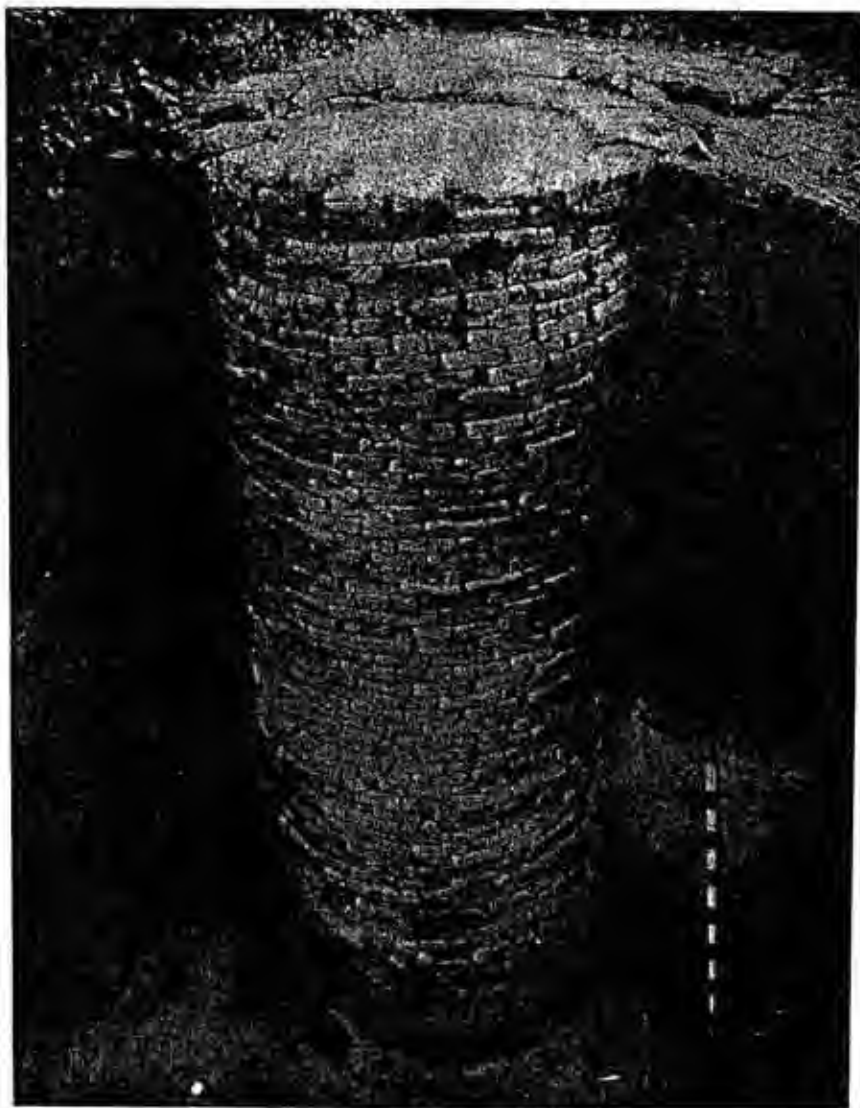
Ganwaria : brick-paved central courtyard in smaller structural complex



18. Ganwaria : massive cistern-structure



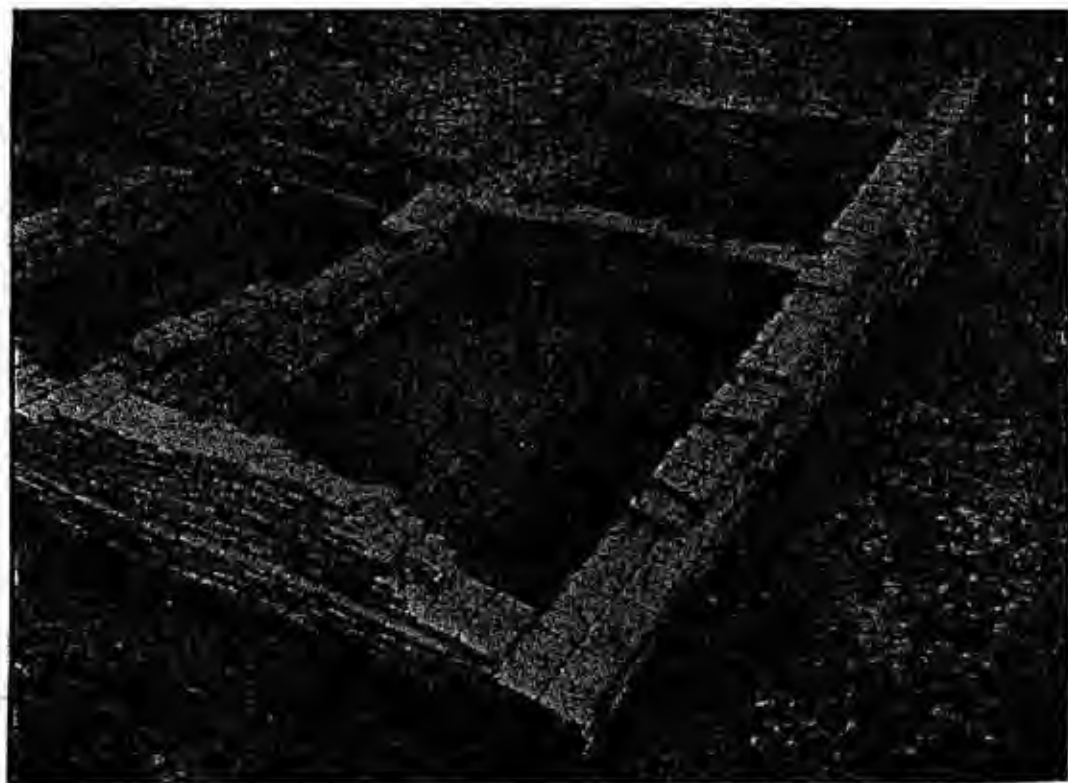
19. Ganwaria : cistern-like structure



20, Ganwaria : well



21. Ganwaria : shrine no. 2



22. Ganwaria : house-complex below shrine no. 2



23. Ganwaria : seated Buddha in terracotta



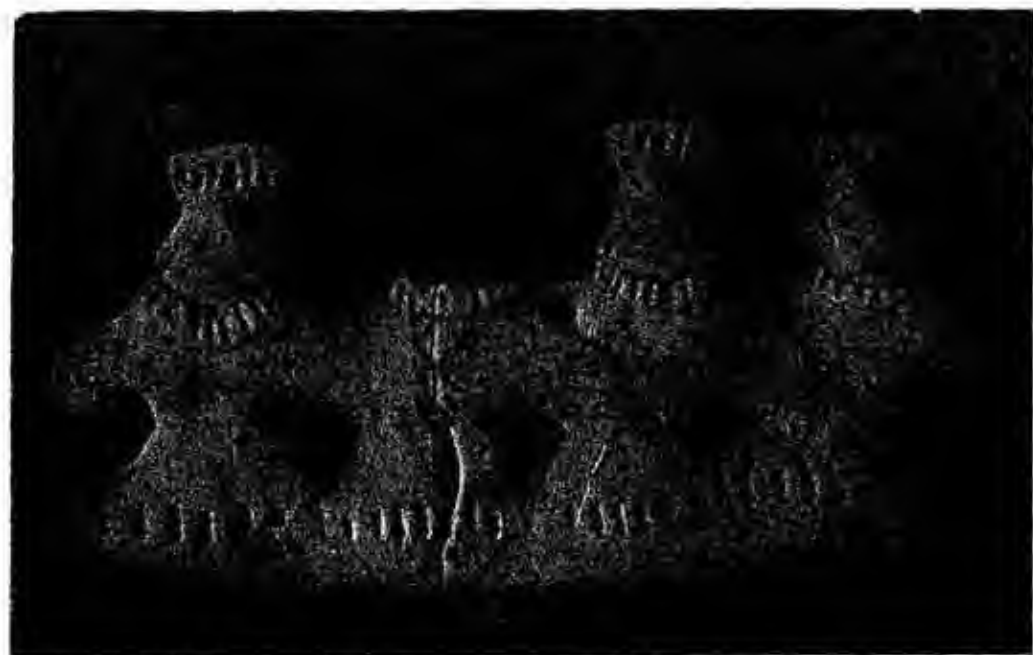
24. Ganwaria : Buddha head in terracotta



25. Ganwaria ; Buddha head in terracotta



26. Ganwaria : three-eyed head in terracotta



27. Ganwaria : dancing figures in terracotta



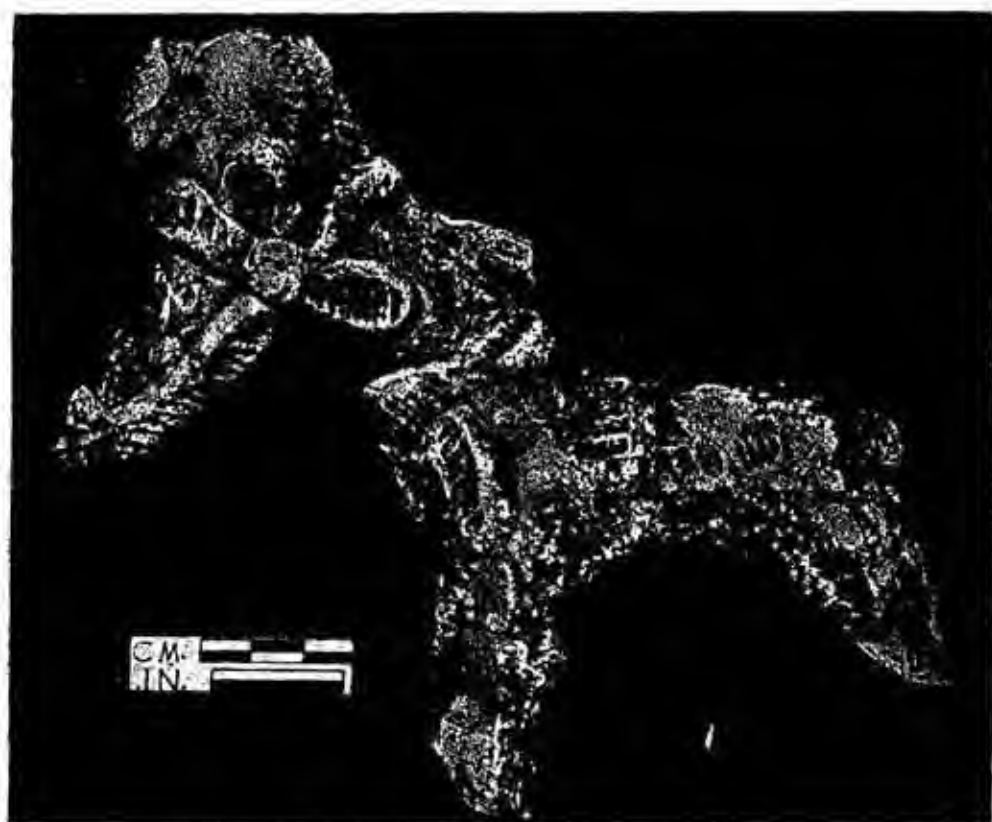
28. Ganwaria : terracotta head with foreign features



29. Ganwaria : terracotta human figurines



30. Ganwaria : terracotta head



31. Ganwaria : terracotta horse



32. Handling over of the relics at New Delhi



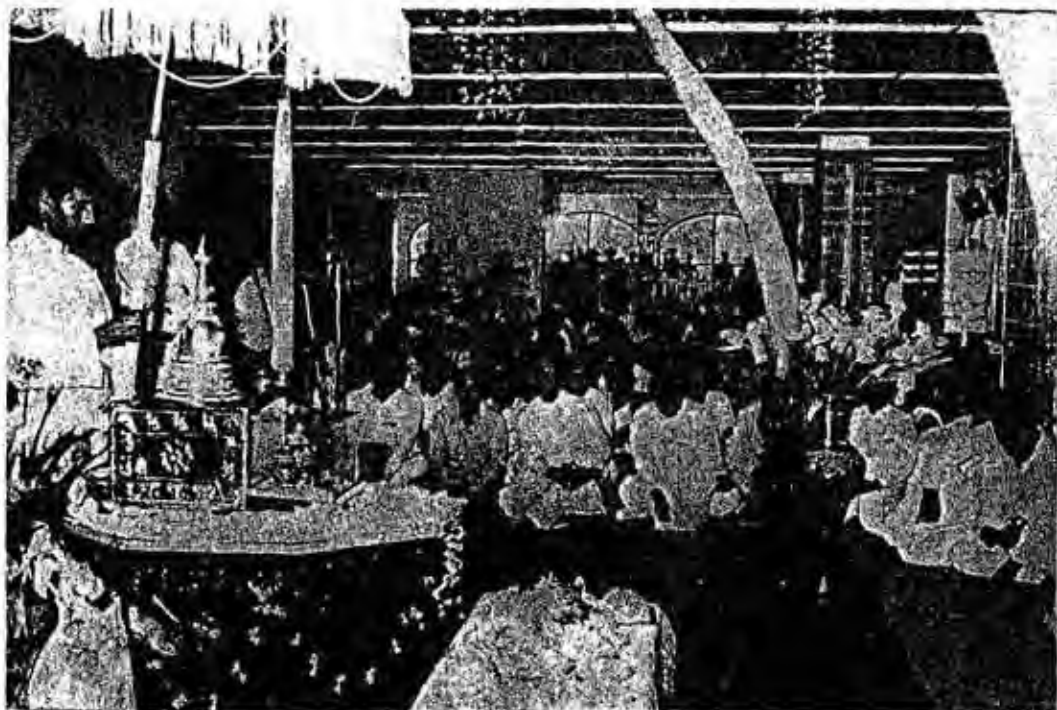
33. Colombo : dancing troupe on the arrival of relics



34. Colombo : relics on the head of *Cultural Affairs Minister*



35. Colombo : relics on the head of the *President*



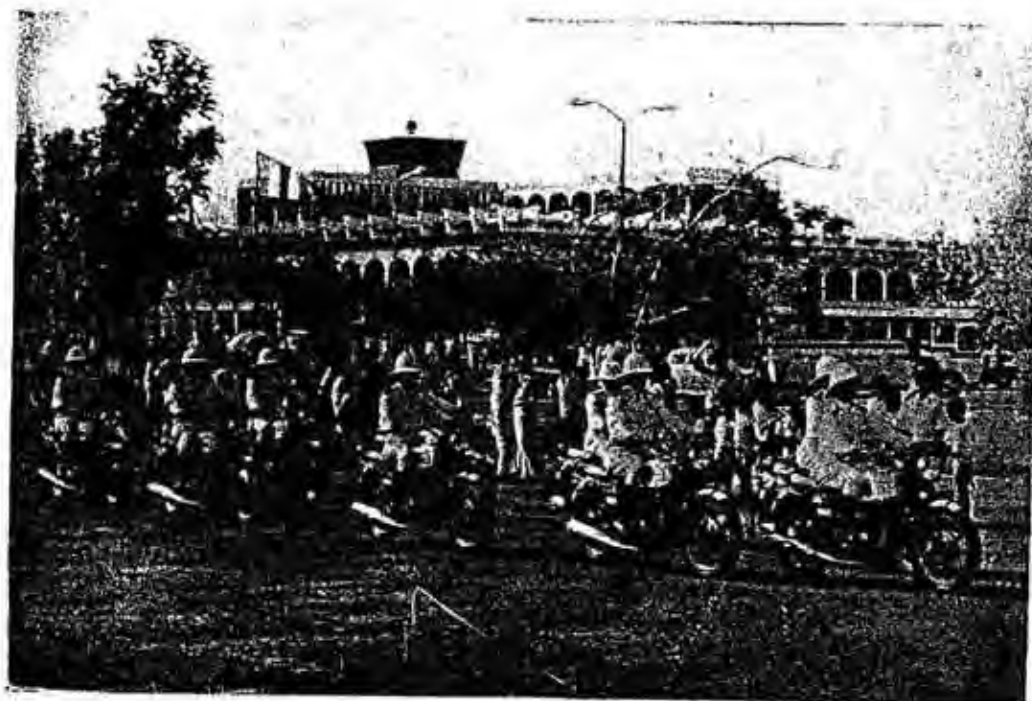
36. Colombo : reception of the relics in the air-port lounge



37. Colombo : President speaking at the air-port lounge



38. Colombo : Indian High Commissioner speaking at the
air-port lounge



39. Colombo : police party piloting the relics



40. Colombo : vehicle carrying the relics

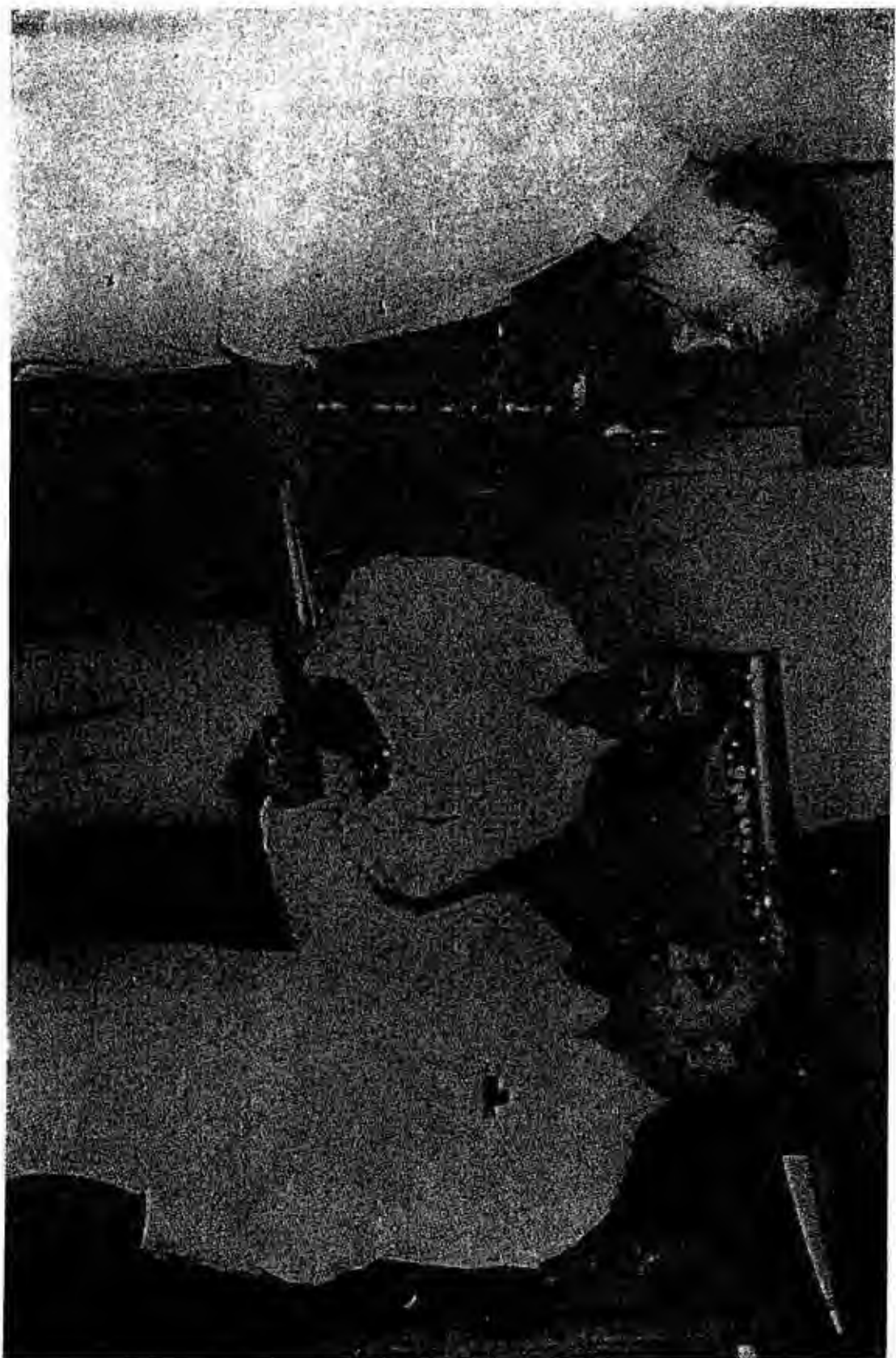


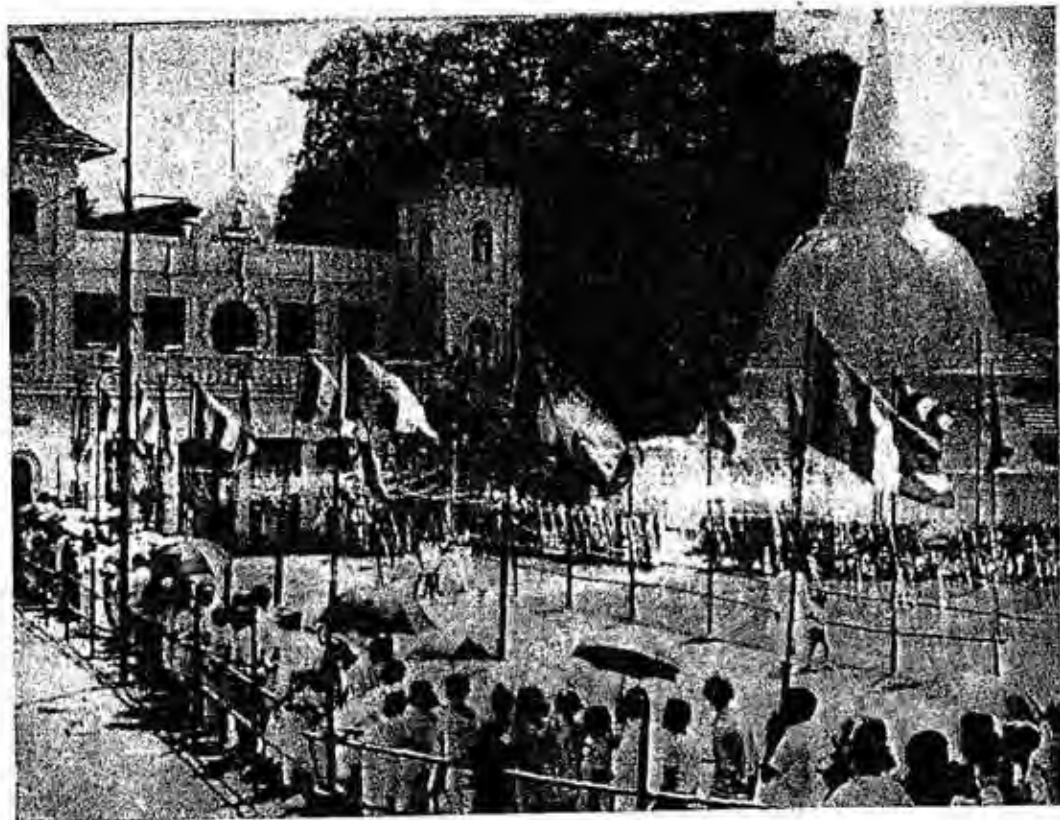
41. Colombo : lighting at Vidyodaya Pirivena



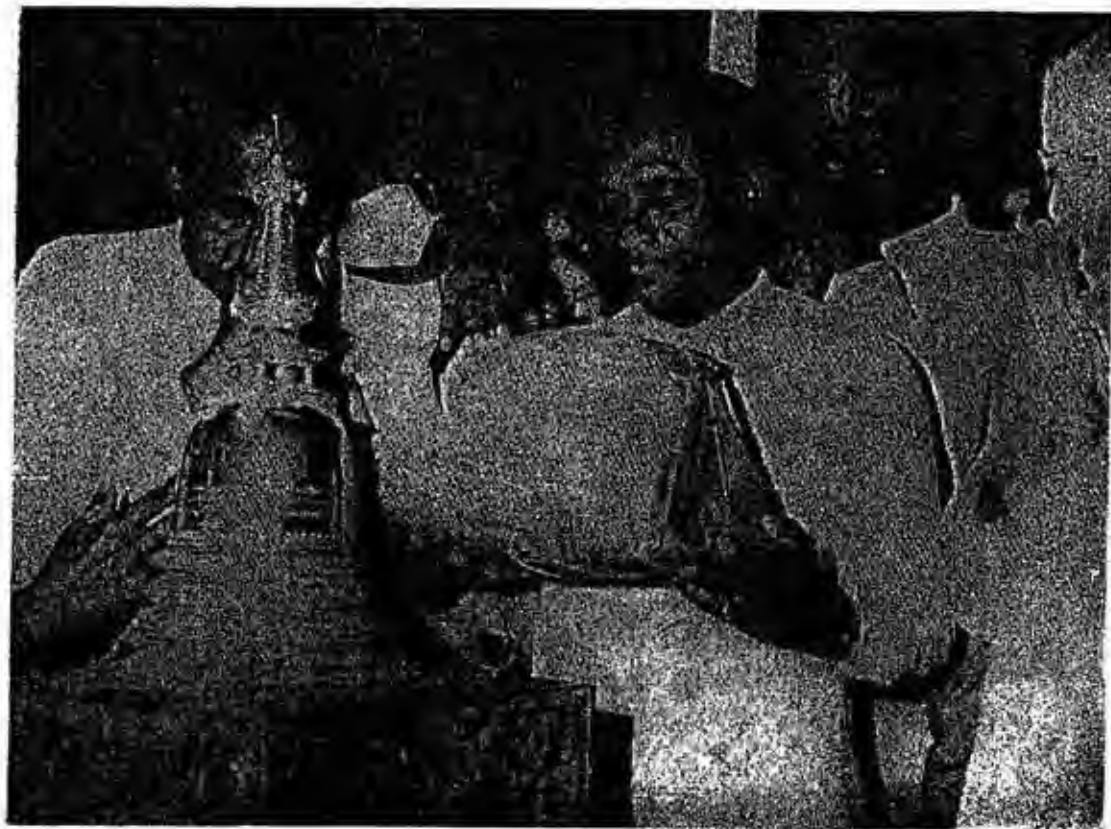
42. Colombo : President worshipping the relics

43. Colombo : presenting book on Kapilvastu to President

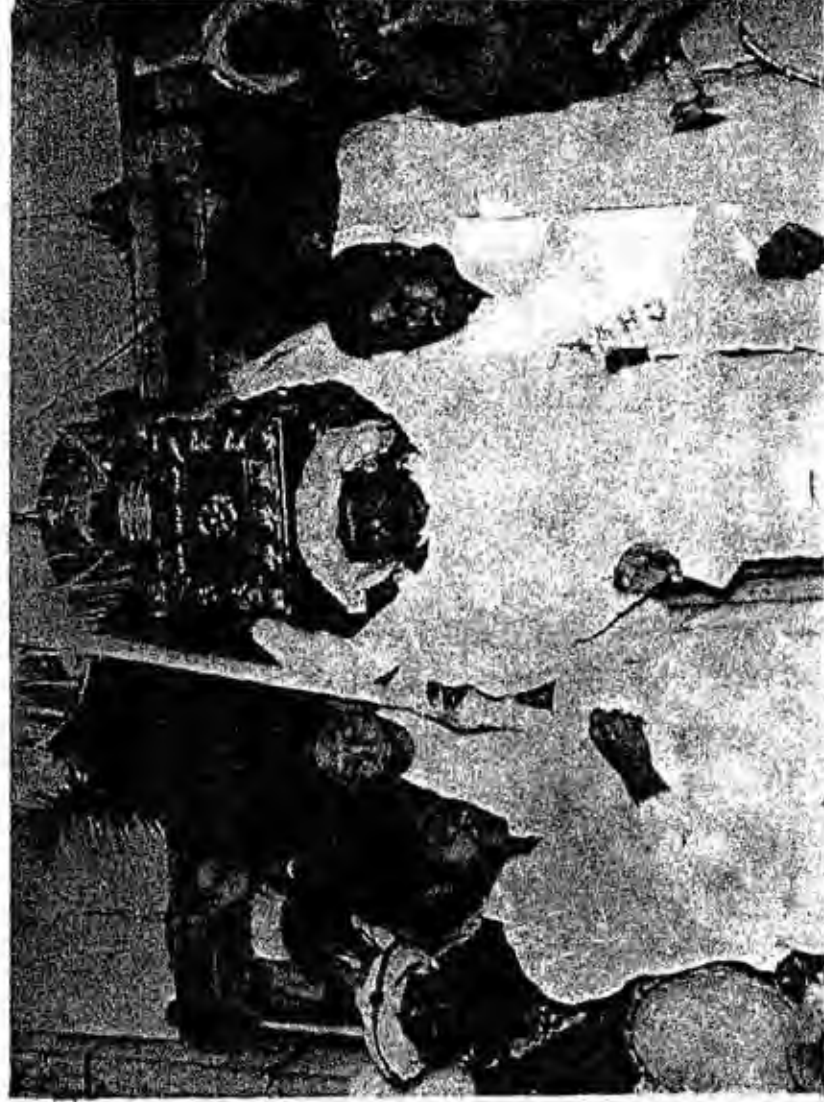




44. Colombo : mile-long queue to worship relics



45. Mihintale : Prime Minister worshipping the relics



46. Kandy : honour

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